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THE MYSTERY OF FAITH OPENED UP.

Or some SERMONS concerning Faith, two whereof were not formerly printed.

Wherein the Nature, Excellency, and Usefulness of that noble Grace is much cleared, and the practice thereof most powerfully pressed.

Whereunto are added three other Sermons, two concerning the *Great-salvation*, one of these not formerly printed, and a third concerning *Death*.

By that pious and worthy Servant of Jesus Christ, Mr. *Andrew Gray*, late Minister of the Gospel in GLASGOW.

All these Sermons being now carefully revised, and much corrected.

John 3.18. *He that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Glasgow, Printed by ROBERT SANDERS, and are to be sold at his shop. *Anno* 1665.

Susanna Colyrave

Regent's Park College
Angus Library
Oxford

CHRISTIAN READER.

AMongſt many weighty and ſoul-piercing Sentences that ye will find in theſe following Sermons, this is one; That the profeſſers of this age, whether they go to Heaven or Hell, they will be the greateſt debtors that ſhal be in either place: the one to the free Grace of God, and the other to his Juſtice. *And certainly, if we ſpeak of theſe in this time, whoſe bleſſed lot it ſhal be to inherit the Kingdom, they cannot but acknowledge themſelves indebted to his love, above all that have gone before them, for waſhing them from ſuch ugly pollutions, as this generation hath been defiled with; for bringing them through ſo great tribulations, preſerving them in the midſt of ſo great tentations, and dangerous ſnares, and have encompaſſed them; yea, and ſtill keeping in the light before them, notwithſtanding of ſo many blaſts (if we may ſo ſpeak) from all the four winds of Hell to blow it out. And on the other hand, if we ſhal ſpeak of theſe who in this generation ſhal periſh, aſſuredly their debt unto Divine Juſtice muſt be exceeding great, above all who are gone down to the pit before them: becauſe the rod of*

their mercies will be found to have been many cubits longer, and many cubits broader, then theirs who lived in the preceeding ages; and the great thing that the Lord hath wrought in our days, have born a greater testimony against the wickedness, hardness, and atheism of this time, then of many former. But above all, the great measure of Gospel-light that he hath no less plentifully offered, then wonderfully preserved to this generation, beyond all our Ancestors, hath undoubtedly made the sin of these who shal utterly reject their own mercy, so out of measure sinful; and their unbelief so exceedingly inexcusable, that their guilt must needs justifie Corazin *and* Bethsaida, *or* Sodom *and* Gomorrah, in that day when every man shal give account of himself to God. *And amongst the many preaching-witnesses, that (alace! we are afraid) shal compear* in that day *against many yet living* in their pleasures, and dead while they live; *This now* glorified Author *cannot but be one, whose testimony must be very condemning, especially to the vain, loose, negligent, and time-wasting youth in this age: For when he was first drawn forth to the Ministry, he was but a youth indeed, scarce twentie years compleat; for within that age, that by the Constitutions of this Church (except in case of more then common abilities, which indeed he had) is required for entring to that great and holy Calling: And for the space of two years after (which was all the time that the Church enjoyed his labor) he was helped to press the truths and threatnings of God so home upon the consciences of his hearers, that as it was observed*

of

of him, by one of his moſt learned and pious Col-leagus, Maſter Durham, *who is now in glory with him, he did many times cauſe the hair of their head to ſtand up: The Lord not only hereby verifying his Word, that he can* take the weak things of the world to confound the ſtrong; and out of the mouths of babes can perfect his own praiſe: *but deſigning alſo (as would ſeem to purpoſe) to ſend a boy out of the ſchool for a reprover of the ſluggiſhneſs of his people, that thereby the aged might be the more aſhamed, and the younger more afraid. Neither do we think that this was all; but truly when we conſider what meaſure of graces, gifts, and experiences the Lord did beſtow upon ſo young a perſon; and then with what humility, ſelf-denial, gravity, prudence, diligence, authority and moderation he was helped to manage theſe Talents, during that ſhort time of his Miniſtry; It may be juſtly conceived that the Lord brought him forth to be a great conviction, even to many of us in the Miniſtry, who came into our Maſters Vineyard long before him, and will go out behind him. And indeed to us it looketh ſomewhat like the Lord's taking up of the* little child, *and ſetting him amongſt the midſt of his contending Diſciples, in theſe times, that even they who would be greateſt amongſt us, might be the leaſt, and ſee ſomewhat of their own weakneſs.*

As to the little Piece, whatever ye ſhal find in it, it hath this to ſay for it ſelf, that whereas many writings in the world do intrude themſelves upon the Preſs, yet this the Preſs hath violently thruſt into the

world: For ſome young Student, from his good affection to the edification of the Lord's eople, and (no doubt) from his high eſteem of the precious Author his memory, having given in to the Preſs a copie of ſome of theſe Sermons, being only notes taken from his mouth when he preached them; no ſooner were they ſeen abroad, but all the Preſſes in the Nation fell a laboring about them, ſo that (if we miſtake not) in leſs then two or three moneths time, three or four Impreſſions were caſt off, yet all of them ſo imperfect and maimed, that howbeit the excellency of the matter, and the freſh remembrance of the worthy Author, his name made them very ſweet to many (eſpecially thoſe who had heard him preach) yet the unſuitable dreſs wherein they appeared, and their miſtakes of the firſt Writers (they being hard lyable to take up every thing as it was ſpoken) occaſioning diverſe material failings in the ſenſe, beſides leſſer faults, could not but be a trouble to thoſe who were acquainted, not only with the ſingular graces, but parts alſo of the eminent Youth. This gave occaſion to ſome friends to ſpeak a little what way theſe prejudices, which both the Truth and the Author's name might ly under, by theſe uncorrect Impreſſions. And finding that the Copie, which by providence the worthy young Gentlewoman who was his wife, had lying by her, though it was but Notes taken from his mouth, yet was the moſt correct that could be found: And that it alſo did contain the whole purpoſes that had been preached upon the Texts; yea, the whole purpoſes concerning Faith that he had preached, according to that

method

method proposed in the first of the Sermons formerly published. This was undertaken to be revised by some, who albeit none of the fittest for these imployments, yet rather or nothing should be done in the business, were content to bestow some hours upon it, according as other necessary imployments would permit. And now having sought out all the Notes of these Sermons, which we could find from other hands, and compared them with the Copie above mentioned, we do again present them unto the Lord's people, not with any confidence that our pains hath put any new lustre upon them; only we have some hopes that the whole subject being now before them, and these things in the way of expression helped, which either might seem to be somewhat unpleasant, or lyable to mistakes, they shal not now be less edifying, nor less acceptable then formerly they were. We did not think fit to make any considerable alterations as to the method, or other things of that kind, lest haply by straining his excellent purposes too much, to shape them to the ordinary rules, or to reduce them to that order which might best have pleased our selves, we should have wronged the matter it self, at least have put them to a loss who did hear him preach; and it may be now upon their reading things in that same order as they heard them, will be the more readily brought under the impressions of that liveliness, power and weight which (it may be) formerly they felt upon their hearts when he was speaking.

If the method do not altogether satisfie some spirits, or the explication seem not so full; or if they find

ſome introductions which poſſibly lead not in ſo cloſe, or ſeem not ſo ſutable to the ſubject of the Sermons; or haply now and then there be ſome little digreſſions from the main purpoſe, we ſhal deſire that this may not at all be conſtructed to be the Authors ignorance of rules and method, or his want of abilities in humane learning, it being well known to thoſe who were beſt acquainted with him, that he had a ſcholaſtick ſpirit, and was in reading far beyond his age and opportunities for ſtudying; but as to all theſe, we ſhal intreat you rather to conſider: 1. *His age, and that his gift was but in the very moulding and breaking (as we ſpeak) in the point of order and method, when the Lord was pleaſed to call him home from his work.* 2. *That every* man hath his proper gift of God, *who in his great wiſdom, and certainly for the good of his Church, doth ſo order, that there is ſomewhat ſingular and peculiar almoſt in every man's way, as to theſe things.* 3. *For any thing we know, he had never that high eſteem of this, or any other of his labors, as to deſign any of them for publick view, and theſe are but Notes taken from his mouth.* 4. *We are perſwaded he ſtudied more his hearers then himſelf. Ye will eaſily perceive when ye have but read a little, that he hath been a man of a very zealous temper; that the great benſil of his eſprit, and that which he did wholly ſpend himſelf about, was to make people know their dangerous condition by nature, and by all means to perſwade them to believe and lay hold upon the* great ſalvation: *And truely that a man in ſuch a frame ſhould leſs attend to theſe leſſer things, is not*

to

to be wondered at. And indeed though these things be good in themselves, and worthy to be looked to in their own place; yet for a Minister of the Gospel, in all Auditories, and upon all occasions, to pin upon every purpose to such a method, and insist unto such a measure of explications and criticismes upon words, it is but to fetter himself, and to starve his people. 5. Consider the dulness of the most part of hearers in this age, and how hard a thing it is to awake a sleeping world, and to get them but to think that it doth concern them to hear in earnest; and possible it was not a smal piece of spiritual wisdom in him (and it may be not unfit to be imitated by others) to begin or end all his Sermons with an awaking word concerning Heaven or Hell, or Judgement, and the danger of chooſing the evil, and refusing of the good. 6. For digressions, the truth is, that his soul was so filled with such longings after Heaven and Glory, and so inflamed with the love of Christ, especially toward the latter end of his race, that when he fell upon these subjects, upon which ye will see most of these digressions are, he could not well contain himself, nor easily bring off his own spirit, a thing not unusual to the Saints in Scripture: And howbeit such things might seem somewhat singular in the time, and not so coherent; yet now we have grounds to apprehend, that they were often strong influences of the Lord's Spirit, stirring up a lamp, as it were, into a sudden blaze, that was not to burn long in his Church. But now we shal detain you no longer; only this we may assure you of, that although these

Sermons are neither ſo exact, nor ſo full, as doubtleſs they would have been, if they had come from the Authors own pen; yet, as we dare ſay, they were ſtudied with prayer, preached with power, and backed with ſucceſs: ſo alſo, if ye ſhal read them with conſideration, meditate with prayer, and practiſe with diligence, ye ſhal never find your time nor pains ill beſtowed; but ſhal have cauſe to bleſs the Lord for this, amongſt other helps that he hath given, for making you meet for the inheritance of the Saints in light. That it may be bleſt to this end, is the earneſt deſire and prayer of your ſervants in the work of the Lord,

RO. TRAIL.
JO. STERLING.

THE

THE MYSTERY OF FAITH OPENED UP.

SERMON I.

JOHN 3. 23. *This is his Commandement, that ye ſhould believe on the Name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.

THIS everlaſting Goſpel, in which there are drawn ſo many precious draughts and divine lineaments of the tranſcendent beauty of a crucified Savior, and of the riches of his unſearchable grace, is a moſt precious and excellent thing; not only becauſe it doth contain moſt abſolute and ſublime precepts & commands, in the exerciſe and obedience of which, we do not only attain unto the higheſt pitch in holineſs; but likewiſe, becauſe it containeth moſt rich and precious promiſes, in the poſſeſſion and fruition of which, we are advanced to the higheſt pinacle of eternal bleſſedneſs; this is clear in the grace of Faith: for what doth more purifie the heart, and ſtamp it with the Image of the inviſible God, then this

this grace of Faith? And what richer promiſes are annexed to any duty, then to this duty of believing, to wit, everlaſting life, and fruition of God; ſo that if we had dwelt fourty dayes at the foot of Mount *Sinai*, and had been under the greateſt diſcovering and condemning power of the Law, we may yet come with boldneſs to Mount *Sion*, and there embrace Jeſus Chriſt, who *is the end of the Law for righteouſneſs to ſuch as believe:* Upon which Mount he ſtandeth, holding forth the golden Scepter of his peace, deſiring us to embrace him, and is crying out that word in *Iſai.* 65. 1. *Behold me, behold me.* O may we not ſummon Angels, and thoſe twenty four elders about the Throne, to help us to wonder, that ever ſuch a command as this came forth, that we ſhoul believe on the Name of the Son of God, after that we had broken that firſt and primitive command, *That we ſhould not eat of the forbidden tree!* Was not this indeed to make mercy rejoice over judgement? And, O may we not wonder at the precious oath of the everlaſting Covenant, whereby he hath ſworn, that he delighteth not in the death of ſinners? What (ſuppoſe ye) were poor *Adam*'s thoughts, when at firſt the doctrine of free-grace, and of a crucified Chriſt Jeſus a Savior, was preached unto him in Paradiſe? What a divine ſurpriſal was this, that Heaven ſhould have preached peace to earth, after that earth had proclaimed war againſt Heaven! Was not this a low ſtep of condeſcendency, to behold an offended God preaching peace and good-will to a guilty ſinner? What could

ſelf

ſelf-deſtroying *Adam* think of theſe morning & firſt diſcoveries of this everlaſting Covenant; Chriſt, as it were, in the morning of time, giving vent to that infinite love, which was reſting in his boſome & precious heart before the foundation of the world was laid? We know not whether the infiniteneſs of his love, the eternity of his love, or the freedom of it, maketh up the greateſt wonder: but ſure theſe three joyned together, maketh up a matchleſs and everlaſting wonder. Would any of you ask that queſtion, what is Chriſt worth? We could give no anſwer ſo ſutable as this, It is above all the Arithmetick of all the Angels in Heaven, and all the men on earth, to calculate his worth; all men here muſt be put to a divine *non plus*. This was *Job*'s divinity, *Job* 28.13 *Man knoweth not the price of wiſdom*. And muſt not Jeſus Chriſt, who is the precious object of faith, and wiſdom of the Father, be a ſupereminent & excellent One, who hath that name of *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, not only engraven on his veſture (which pointeth out the conſpicuouſneſs of his Majeſty) but even alſo upon his thigh, to point out that in all his goings & motions, he proveth himſelf to be higher then the Kings of the earth? And howbeit the naked propoſing of the object doth not convert, yet if once our ſouls were admitted to behold ſuch a ſight, as Chriſt in his beauty and Majeſty, and to be ſatisfied with the divine rayes of his tranſcendent glory, then certainly we ſhould find a bleſſed neceſſity laid upon us of cloſing with him: for Chriſt hath a ſword proceed

ceeding out of his precious mouth, by which he doth ſubject and ſubjugat his own to himſelf, as well as he hath a ſword girded upon his thigh, by which he judgeth and maketh war with his enemies. We confeſs it is not only hard, but ſimply impoſſible, to cõmit an hyperbole in cõmending of him; his worth being always ſo far above our expreſſions, and our expreſſions always ſo far beneath his worth, therefore we may be put to propoſe that deſire unto him; *Exalt thy ſelf, O Lord, above the Heavens.*

But now to our purpoſe, being at this time to begin our diſcourſe upon that radical & precious grace of Faith, we intend to ſpeak of it under this twofold notion and conſideration. Firſt, we ſhal ſpeak of it as it is juſtifying, *or as it doth lay hold upon the righteouſneſs of a crucified Savior, making application of the precious promiſes in the Covenant of free grace, which we call juſtifying Faith.* And in the ſecond place, we ſhal ſpeak a little unto Faith, *as it doth lay hold upon Chriſt's ſtrength, for advancing the work of mortification; and doth diſcover the perſonal excellencies of Jeſus Chriſt, by which we advance in the work of Holineſs, and divine conformity with God, which we call ſanctifying Faith.* However, it is not to be ſuppoſed that theſe are different habi s of Faith, but different acts flowing from the ſame ſaving habit, laying hold and exerciſing themſelves upon Chriſt in different reſpects, and for diverſe ends. Now to ſpeak upon the firſt, we have made choiſe of theſe words. The Apoſtle *John* in the former verſe had been pointing out the precious

advant

advantages of the grace of Obedience, & of keeping of his Commands, that ſuch an one hath, as it were, an arbitrary power with God, & doth receive many precious returns of prayer: As likewiſe, that one who is exerciſed in the grace of Repentance, is God's delight; which is included in this, that he doth thoſe things that are well pleaſing in his ſight. And now in theſe words he doth, as it were, anſwer an objection that might be propoſed about the impoſſibility of attaining theſe precious advantages, ſeeing his commands were ſo large, and that hardly could they be remembred. This he doth ſweetly anſwer, by ſetting down in this one verſe a ſhort compend or breviary both of Law and Goſpel, *viz.* *That we ſhould love one another*, which is the compend of the Law, and *that we ſhould believe on the Name of his Son*, which is the compend of the Goſpel: & by this he ſhoweth the Chriſtian that there are not many things required of him for attaining theſe excellent advantages; but if he exerciſe himſelf in the obedience of theſe two comprehenſive commandements, he ſhal find favor both with God and man. And as concerning this precious grace of Faith, we have, 1. The advantages of it implyed in the words; and clear alſo from the ſcope, as no doubt all the commands have infinite advantages infolded in their boſom, which redounds to a believer, by his practiſing of them. And 2. the excellency of it holden forth in the words, in that it is called his *command*, as if he had no other command but this. And the Greek particle is here prefixed, which hath a great

great deal of emphasis and force in it, *And this is his Commandement.* But 3. there is this also, the absolute necessity of this grace, holden forth here in this word, *his Commandement*; as if he had said by proposing of this command, I do set life and death before you, and that you would not conceive that it is an arbitrary and indifferent thing for you to believe or not; but be perswaded of this, that as an infinite advantage may constrain you to the obedience of it, so absolute necessity must perswade you to act that which is of your everlasting concernment. And lastly, ye have the precious object upon which Faith (which is justifying) doth exercise it self, and that is upon the Name of the Son of God: And no doubt Faith is that excellent grace which doth elevate the soul unto a sweet & inseparable union with Christ, and is that golden and precious knot that doth eternally knit the hearts of these precious friends together. Faith is that grace that draweth the first draughts of Christ's precious Image on our hearts, and by love doth accomplish and perfect them. No, Faith taketh hold not only on the faithfulness of God, that he is a God of truth, & that in him there is no lie: but likewise it taketh hold on the Omnipotency of God, that he is one to whom nothing is too hard; and on the infinite mercy & love of God, that he is one who doth delight to magnifie this attribute above all his works; and these are the three great pillars of justifying Faith. From the first, it answereth all the objections of sense, which doth ordinarily cry forth; *Doth his promise fail for evermore?*

And

And that with this one word, *If he hath once purpoſed it, he will alſo do it*; and if he hath once *ſpoken it, he will alſo make it come to paſs*. From the ſecond, it anſwereth all theſe objections that may ariſe from carnal reaſon and probability, which tendeth to the weakning of his confidence. And theſe do oftentimes cry out; *How can theſe things be?* But Faith laying hold upon the Omnipotency of God, *it ſtaggers not at the promiſe*, but is ſtrong *in the faith, giving glory to God*. And it is the noble and divine exerciſe of this heroick grace of Faith, that theſe objections of reaſon and probability, which it cannot anſwer, it will lay them aſide, and yet cloſe with the promiſe; which was the practice of believing *Abraham*, who *conſidered not* his own body being weak, nor the barrenneſs of *Sarahs* womb. As likewiſe it was the commendable practice of that woman, *Matth.* 15. who not being able to anſwer the ſecond trial of her faith from reaſon; yet notwithſtanding, Faith made her cry out, *Have mercy on me, O Son of David*. And from the laſt, a Chriſtian doth anſwer all the arguments of misbelief, which doth ariſe from the convictions of our unworthineſs and ſinfulneſs, which makes us oftentimes imbrace that Divinity of *Peters*, *Luk* 5. 8. *Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man*. But Faith taking hold on the infinite mercy and love of Chriſt, it anſwereth all with this: He walks not with us according to that rule of merit, but according to that precious and golden rule of love and boundleſs compaſſion.

But before we ſhal ſpeak any thing unto you of theſe

theſe things, we would a little point out ſome few things to be known as previous to theſe; we ſhal not dwel long in pointing out the nature of juſtifying Faith: It is that grace whereby a Chriſtian being convinced of his loſt eſtate, and of an utter impoſſibility to ſave himſelf, he doth flee to the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and unto him who is that precious City of refuge, and there doth abide till our High Prieſt ſhal die, which ſhal not be for ever. Or if ye will, it is a ſweet travelling of the immortal ſoul betwixt infinite mercy, and infinite love; betwixt an utter impoſſibility to ſave our ſelves, and a compleat ability in him to *ſave to the uttermoſt*; betwixt abounding ſin, and ſuperabounding mercy: Hence Faith is often holden forth to us in Scripture under that notion of comming, *Iſai* 55. 1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters. Rev.* 22. 17. *Whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Heb.* 7. 25. *Wherefore he is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come to God by him.* And we may ſay by the way, that if once a ſinner could be brought to this, to count all his own righteouſneſs but filthy rags, and to believe that a man is as really juſtified before God by imputed righteouſneſs, as if it were by inherent holineſs; ſurely ſuch an one were not far from the Kingdom of God. Neither ſhal we ſtand long to point out this unto you, that it is your duty to believe; for it is clear, not only from this place, but likewiſe from *Iſai.*45. 22. *Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all ye ends of the earth. Matth.* 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labor*

and

and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. John 14. 1. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.* Isai. 55. 1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come, buy without money, and without price.* But, oh! it's a great misery of many (and that which may be a subject of a perpetual lamentation) that we can neither be subject to the Law, as commanding to obey it, or as threatning to believe it: Nor to the Gospel, as promising to embrace it, and sweetly to receive it. O but that primitive temptation and delusion whereby Satan did deceive our first father, is that whereby he yet seeks to catch and delude many souls, *viz.* That though we eat of the forbidden fruit, & walk in the vain imaginations of our own hearts, yet he doth suggest this to us, that we shal not die, but shal once be as God; this is Satan's great and deluding Divinity: And therefore to inforce this great and precious command a little further, we shal propose these considerations.

First, that the Gospel hath laid no obstruction in our way of closing with Christ, and partaking of the effects of the Gospel: but on the contrary, showeth that the great impediment is our want of willingness, which we lay in our own way, as is clear from *John* 5. 40. *Ye will not come to me that ye may get life:* as likewise from *Revel.* 22. 27. where the Gates of the Gospel are cast open, *and whosoever will*, are commanded to enter in: So that although you may father your misbelief upon your inability, or that your spot is not the spot of his people, yet know

know that the rise and original of it is want of willingness. But to make this more clear, we would have you knowing this, that all the qualifications annexed to this commandement of Faith, as that in *Matth.* 11. 28. speaketh out the qualifications rather of these that will come, then of all these that ought to come: Or he inviteth these that through the spirit of discouragement and misbelief, have the greatest reluctancy to come; and may not that cardinal and soul-refreshing promise, *John* 6. 37. stop the mouth of misbelief, so that it should have nothing to say? *He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out:* ye may reduce your misbelief rather to the sinfulness of your will, then to the sinfulness of your walk; and if once ye could come to the length of willingness to embrace Jesus Christ, all other objections and knots should be sweetly loosed and dissolved.

Secondly, consider that though we should pray the one half of our time, and weep the other, yet if we want this noble grace of Faith, the wrath of God shal abide on us. What are all the works of these hypocrites, and those glistering acts of Law-sanctification, but a plunging of our selves in the ditch, until our own cloaths abhor us? Therefore it is that after the Prophet *Zachary* hath made mention in the twelfth Chapter of his Prophesie, of making *bitter lamentation for him whom we have pierced, as for an only son*, yet in the beginning of the 13. Chapter, he maketh mention of a *fountain opened to the house of* David, *for sin and for uncleanness*; which

which may intimate unto us, that although we have washed our selves with our own tears, yet there is use of the blood of Christ, and that we must be washed in that fountain even from our *own righteousnesses, which are but as filthy rags.*

Thirdly, consider that great and monstrous sinfulness that is in this sin of unbelief; we will strain at a gnat, but many will easily swallow down this Camel: We will tithe mint and annise, and fast twice in the week, but neglect faith and love, and judgement, which are the weighter things of the Law. And indeed there are these things which speak out the sinfulness of unbelief. 1. That when the holy Ghost is sent to convince the world of sin, *John* 16. 9. he pitched upon this sin, as though there were no other sin of which the world had need to be convinced: *He will convince the world of sin, because they believe not on the Son of God:* & no doubt there is more sinfulness in that sin, then in many breaches of the Moral Law, it being a sin against matchless love, and against that which is the remedy of sin. 2. That it is called by way of eminency, disobedience, as is clear from *Heb.* 4. 11. *Lest any of you fall after the same example of unbelief:* or as the word may be rendered, *lest any of you fall after that example of disobedience, Eph.* 2. 2. 3. That amongst all these that shal be eternally excommunicate from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, those that are guilty of this sin of unbelief, they are put in the first place, *Rev.* 21. 1. And 4. That unbelief doth contradict & deny these three

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precious and cardinal attributes of God. 1. Doth not unbelief contradict his faithfulneſs, and make him a liar? 1. *John* 5. 10. 2. Doth it not contradict the infinitneſs of his power? And 3. the infinitneſs of his love, & ſuppoſeth that there is ſomething too hard for him which his power cannot reach, nor his infinite love overcome? We may reduce many of our queſtions and diſputings of his good will to this original, *viz.* to the diſputing of his power. No doubt, if we belong to him, we ſhal once ſing that note of lamentation over our unbelief; *This is our infirmity, for changes are from the right hand of the moſt High.*

And laſtly, to inforce this precious command of Faith, conſider that it is his command which ſpeaketh forth this, that we muſt not take an indulgence or diſpenſation to our ſelves to believe, or not to believe at our pleaſure. And is it not a ſtrange thing that Chriſtians are leſs convinced of the breaches of the Cómandement of Faith, then of other commands? They think misbelief to be but a *Zoar*, a little ſin; and it proceedeth either from this, that the convictions of other ſins (as the neglect of prayer, or the ſin of ſwearing, or committing adultery) do ariſe from a natural conſcience; for there is ſomewhat of natures light to make us abominate & hate them; when yet the light of nature will not lead us, to the convictions of the ſinfulneſs of misbelief, it being a Goſpel & more ſpiritual ſin. Or it proceedeth from this, that unbelief doth ordinarily paſs vail'd under the vizard of ſome refined vertue,

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as humility and tenderneſs, though that rather it may be ſaid, that it is pride and ignorance, cloathed with the garments of humility. And no doubt, Chriſt doth account obedience to this commandement of Faith, the greateſt act of humility, as is clear from *Rom.* 10. 3. where it is called ſubmiſſion; they ſubmitted *not to the righteouſneſs of God.* Or elſe it proceedeth from this, that we conceive that the cõmandement of Faith is not of ſo large extent as other commands, and ſo doth not bind us to the obedience of it; but know this, that it ſhal be the condemnation of the world, that they have not believed on the Name of the Son of God; and no doubt but it is Satan's great deſign and cardinal project, to keep us back from obedience to the cõmandement of Faith, & that we ſhould not liſten to the precious promiſes of this everlaſting Goſpel, but ſhould reject the counſel of God, againſt our ſelves, and refuſe his precious and divine call.

The ſecond previous conſideration that we wold give, ſhal be to ſhow you what are the cauſes that there is ſo much diſputing of our intereſt, and ſo little believing; that we are unſtable as water, marring our own excellency, ſpending ſo much of our time in walking under a cloud, and are ſo ſeldome admitted to read our names in theſe precious and eternal records of Heaven. No doubt, theſe things have influence upon it, *viz.* 1. That we are more judging of God by his diſpenſations, then by his Word, ſuppoſing ever the change of diſpenſations to ſpeak for the change of our ſtate; this is misbeliefs

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Divinity, that when sense cannot read love in his face, but he appeareth to frown, and to cast a cloud over it, then it is presumption (saith sense) to read love in his heart, or in his Word; but know it was a self-denying practice of believing *Job*, to cry out, *Though he should kill me, I will believe in him*. Therfore make not dispensatiõs your Bible; otherwise ye will stumble at the noon tide of the day, & shal halt in your way; knew you never what such a thing as this meaned, to ascend in overcoming thoughts of his love, notwithstanding any thing that his dispensations might preach? We conceive, that if the eyes of our Faith were opened, we might see infinite love engraven on the darkest acts, and most dismal-like dispensations of his to us, though it be oftentimes written in dark and dim characters to sense.

2. There is this likewise which hath influence upon our so much disputing and misbelieving, *viz.* a guilty conscience, and the entertainment of some predominant lust, which oftentimes occasioneth our walking in darkness, and having no light. This is clear from 1. *Tim.* 1. 19. where that precious jewel of Faith can be holden in no other place but in a pure conscience, that is that Royal palace wherein it must dwel; and no doubt, if once we make *shipwrack of a good conscience*, we will *erre concerning our Faith*. A bosome-idol when it is entertained, doth exceedingly marre the vigorous exercises of these graces, which are evidences of our Faith: and certainly Grace rather in its degrees, then in its sincerity, or simple being only, is that which giveth

giveth the clear evidence of Faith. Therefore when we find not love in its high and eminent actings, we hardly win to make it any clearly-concluding demonstration of our Faith.

3. As likewise a bosom idol when it is entertained, maketh us to lose much of our high esteem and reputation of Jesus Christ, which doth exceedingly interrupt the sweet and precious actings of Faith. For it is certain, that if once the immortal soul be united to Jesus Christ by the bond of love and respect, then our Faith will increase with the increase of God. Our entertainment of a bosom idol is ordinarily punished with the want of the sensible intimations of his peace, and of our interest in him: so that sometimes his own are constrained to cry out; *God hath departed from me, and he answereth me not, neither by dreams nor visions.*

4. There is that likewise that hath influence upon it, our not closing absolutely with Jesus Christ, but upon conditions and suppositions. We make not an absolute and blank resignation of our selves over to Christ, to hold fast the Covenant, notwithstanding he should dispense both bitter and sad things to us, but we conceive that Christ's Covenant with believers, is like that Covenant that God made with *Noah*, that there should be Summer and Winter, seed time and harvest, night and day unto a Christian: a Christian must have his night as well as his day: he must once sow in tears, before he reap in joy: he must once go forth, bearing his precious seed, before he can return bearing his

ſheaves in his boſome: and that this hath influence upon our inſtability, may be ſeen from this, that often a Chriſtian after his firſt cloſing with Chriſt, he meeteth with deſertion in point of tenderneſs, in point of joy, and in point of ſtrength, ſo that his corruption ſeems now to be awaked more then formerly, that he wants thoſe ſeeming enjoyments of him which formerly he had: and that much of his ſoftneſs of his heart hath now evaniſhed, which is clear ſomewhat from *Heb.*10.32. *And after they were enlightened, they endured a great fight of afflictions.* For the word that is there rendered afflictions, ſignifieth inward troubles through the motions of ſin, as well as outward afflictions, *Gal.* 5.24. And God uſeth to diſpenſe this way to his own, not only to take trial of the ſincerity of your cloſing with him, but to make our faith more ſtedfaſt and ſure. And no doubt, if we cloſe not abſolutely with Chriſt (when under theſe temptations and trials) we will reject our confidence as a deluſion, and ſuppoſe it to be but a morning dream: therefore it were a noble and divine practice of a Chriſtian, to cloſe with Chriſt without reſervation, ſeeing he doth diſpenſe nothing but that which might tend to our advantage. And we would ſay to ſuch as are under theſe temptations, that if ye endeavor to reſiſt them, it is the moſt compendious and excellent way to make your hearts which now are *dying as a ſtone*, to be as *a watered garden, and ſprings of water, whoſe waters fail not, and to make you ſtrong as a Lyon*, ſo that no temptation can rouſe you up; but ye ſhal be enabl

enabled to *tread upon the high places of the earth*, and to ſing ſongs of triumph over your idols.

5. There is this likewiſe which hath influence on it, our building of our Faith more upon ſenſe then upon Chriſt or his Word; and therefore it is, that faith is ſo unconſtant and changeable as the Moon, we not knowing what ſuch a thing meaneth; *To hope againſt hope, and to be ſtrong in Faith, giving glory to God.* And we would only ſay unto you that erect your confidence upon ſo ſandy a foundation, that when the wind and ſtorm of temptation ſhal blow, *that houſe ſhal fall to the ground.* As likewiſe building of your Faith upon ſenſe, doth abate much of your joy, and much of your precious eſteem of Jeſus Chriſt: It being Faith exerciſing it ſelf upon an inviſible object, that maketh the Chriſtian *to rejoice with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory*, 1. *Pet.* 1. 8.

6. There is this laſt that hath influence upon it, even our ſloathfulneſs in the exerciſe of our ſpiritual duties, by which Faith ſhould be entertained. Faith is a tender grace, and a plant that muſt not be ruſted, but nouriſhed through the ſap of other precious graces: but we grow remiſs in our ſpiritual duties; and do turn our ſelves upon the bed of ſecurity, as the door upon the hinges. And doth not our drowſineſs cloath us with rags, and make us fall into a deep ſleep, while as, if we were diligent, *our ſouls ſhould be made fat and rich?* Yea, ſloathfulneſs doth not only imped aſſurance of this, that it hindereth the divine communications of his love and

respect, by which assurance may be kept in life, *Cant.* 5. 2. but also, *it maketh our poverty come on us as an armed man, and our want as one that travelleth.* And withall it letteth loose the chain by which our corruptions are tyed, and maketh them to lift up their head, by which our assurance is much darkened and impaired, and our hope is much converted into diffidence and despair. And we would only say this, it is the diligent Christian that is the believing Christian, and it is the believing Christian that is the diligent Christian; there being such a sweet reciprocation betwixt these two precious graces, that they die and live together.

Now thirdly, we shal shut up our discourse with this, in pointing out a little what are those things that do obstruct a Christians closing with Christ, and believing in his precious Name.

I. We conceive that this woful evil doth spring and rise from that fundamental ignorance of this truth, that there is a God, as is clear from *Heb* 11.6. where that is required as a qualification of a Comer, *That he should believe that God is:* & assuredly, till once this precious truth be imprinted upon our souls, *as with a pen of iron, and point of a diamond*, we will look upon the Gospel as an Utopian fancy, and a deluding notion, to teach unstable souls, who know not the way to attain unto real blessedness. And truly it is a fault in many, that they begin to dispute their being in Christ, before they know there is a Christ; and do dispute their interest in him before they believe his being, and

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that there is such an one as is called Christ.

II. Our coming unto Christ is obstructed from the want of the real and spiritual convictions of our desperate and lost estate without Jesus Christ, and that our unspeakable misery is the want of him; which is clear from *Jer.* 2. 31. *We are Lords, we will come no more to thee.* And it is evident from *Rev.* 3. 16. 18. That such a deluſion as this doth overtake many, that they can reign as Kings without Jesus Christ; and that they can build their happiness, and establish their carnal felicity upon another foundation: But, O that we could once win to this, to believe what we are without Christ, and to believe what we shal be in the enjoyment of him; with the one eye to descend and look upon these deep draughts that the mystery of iniquity hath imprinted upon our immortal souls, and withall, to reflect upon the wages of sin, which is death, and be constrained to cry out, *Wo is me, for I am undone:* and with the other eye to ascend and look to that help that is *laid upon one that is mighty*, and to make use of the righteousness of a crucified Savior, that so what we want in our selves, we may get it abundantly made up in him.

III. There is this likewise that obstructeth our closing with Christ, our too much addictedness to the pleasures and carnal delights of a passing world, which is clear from *Luke* 14. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. *Mat.* 22. 5. 6. where those that are invited to come to the feast of this Gospel, they do make their Apologie, and with one consent do refuse it, some pretending

on impossibility to come, and some pretending an unavoidable inconveniency in coming. And, O! what a ridiculous thing is that poor complement that those deluded sinners used to Christ, *I pray you, have us excused?* And is not the world the great plea and argument that they make use of, when they will not come and make use of Christ.

IV. There is this lastly, which doth obstruct ones coming to Christ, their unwillingness to be denied to their own righteousness, which is clear from *Rom.* 10.23. and we conceive, if once these two were believed (which are the great Tropicks, out of which all these arguments may be brought, to perswade you to imbrace Christ) to wit, the infinite excellency of his Person on whom we are to believe, and the infinite loss that those do sustain who shal be eternally rejected of him: We might be perswaded to entertain a divine abstractedness, and holy retirement from all things that are here below, and to pitch our desires alone upon him, *who is the everlasting wonder of Angels, and the glory of the higher House.* O! did we once suppose the unspeakable happiness of those whose Faith is now advanced unto everlasting felicity and fruition, and hath entered into that eternal possession of the promises; might not we be constrained to cry out, *It is good for us once to be there?* Christ weepeth to us in the Law, but we do not lament; and he pipeth unto us in the Gospel, but we do not dance; he is willing to draw us *with the cords of men, and with the bonds of love, and yet we will not have him to reign over us.* May

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not Angels laugh at our folly, that we ſhould ſo undervalue this Prince of love, and ſhould contemn him who is holden in ſo high eſteem and reverence in theſe two great aſſemblies that are above of Angels, and of the ſouls of juſt men made perfect? Chriſt hath now given us the firſt and ſecond Summons: the day is approaching when the ſad and woful Summons ſhal be ſent againſt us, of *departing from him into thoſe everlaſting flames*, out of which there is no redemption: and this ſhal be the capſtone of our miſery, that we had once life in our offer, but did refuſe it: And though there were four gates ſtanding open toward the North, by which we might have entered into that everlaſting reſt, yet we chooſed rather *to walk in the paths that lead down to death, and take hold of the chambers of hell.* O! but there are many that think the Goſpel cunningly deviſed fables and fooliſhneſs, (they being unwilling to believe that which ſenſe cannot comprehend, nor reaſon reach) and this is the ground why the Goſpel is not embraced, but is rejected as an humane invention, and as a morning dream, &c.

SERMON II.

JOHN 3. 23. *This is his Commandement, that ye ſhould believe on the Name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.

THere are three great and cardinal myſteries, in the unfolding of which, all a Chriſtians

time ought to be ſpent. Firſt, there is that precious and everlaſting myſtery of Chriſt's love and condeſcendency, which thoſe intellectual Spirits the Angels are not able fully to comprehend. Secondly, there is that woful myſtery of the deſperate deceitfulneſs and wickedneſs of the heart, which no man was ever yet able to fathom and comprehend. And thirdly, there is that precious myſtery of that eternal felicity and bleſſedneſs that is purchaſed unto the Saints, that once they ſhal reign with Chriſt, not a thouſand years only, but throughout all the ages of everlaſting and endleſs eternity: ſo that there is this difference betwixt this Garden of everlaſting delights, that Chriſt hath purchaſed to the Saints, and that firſt Paradiſe and *Eden* wherein man was placed. There was a ſecret gate in the firſt, thorow which a man that had once entered in, muſt go out again: But in the ſecond and precious *Eden*, there is no acceſs for going out; and all that is to be known of theſe three myſteries, is much comprehended in this, to know that they cannot fully be known. *Paul* was a bleſſed proficient in the ſtudy of the firſt myſtery, and had almoſt attained to the higheſt claſs of knowledge, and yet he is conſtrained to profeſs himſelf to be ignorant of this: Hence is that word, *Eph.* 3. 19. *That ye may know the love of Chriſt which paſſeth knowledge.* And is it not a myſterious command, to deſire people to know that which cannot be known? The meaning whereof we conceive to be this in part, that *Paul* preſſed this upon them, that they ſhould ſtudy to know that this

this myſtery of Chriſt's love could not be known. *Jeremiah* was a bleſſed proficient in the knowledge and ſtudy of the ſecond myſtery; he had ſome morning & twi-light diſcoveries of that; and yet though in ſome meaſure he had fathomed that deep, yet he is conſtrained to cry out, chap. 17. verſ. 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked, who can know it?* And indeed that which *Solomon* ſaith of Kings, *Prov.* 25. 3. may well be ſaid of all men in this reſpect: *The Heavens for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of man, are unſearchable.* The Apoſtle *Paul* alſo was a bleſſed proficient in the ſtudy of the third myſtery, having ſome morning and twi-light diſcoveries of that promiſed reſt, and was once caught up to the third Heavens, and yet when he is beginning to ſpeak of it; 1. *Cor.* 2. 9. he declareth all men to be ignorant of the knowledge of this profound myſtery of man's bleſſedneſs, and cryeth out; *Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* And if there be any thing further to be known of theſe myſteries, the grace of Faith is found worthy amongſt all the graces of the Spirit, *to open the ſeven ſeals* of the great depths of God. Is not the grace of Faith that whereby a Chriſtian doth take up the inviſible excellency and vertue of a dying Chriſt? Is not Faith that precious grace by which a Chriſtian muſt take up the ſpots and blemiſhes that are within himſelf? And is not the grace of Faith that precious grace that placeth a

Christian upon the top of Mount *Pisga*, and there letteth him see a sight of the promised land; and doth open a door in Heaven, thorow which a Christian is admitted to see Christ sitting upon his Throne? And Faith hath not only a kind of Omnipotency, as is clear, *that all things are possible to them that believe*; but it hath a kind of Omnisciency, and all knowledge, that it can take up and comprehend all the greatest mysteries of Heaven, according to that word, *Prov.* 28. 5. *He that seeketh the Lord, shal understand all things*: As if he had said, there is nothing dark to a believing Christian, as there is nothing impossible to a believing Christian. As likewise Faith is that grace that must take aside the vail that is spread over the face of a crucified Christ: and Faith is that precious Spy that goeth forth, and taketh up these wonderful excellencies that are in him. The grace of Love, as it were, is born blind, and it hath nothing wherewith to solace it self, but that which is presented unto it by this noble and excellent grace of Faith.

Now before we shal speak any thing to these things that we did propose to speak of at last occasion, we shal yet speak a little unto some things which are necessary to be known for the distinct uptaking of the nature of justifying Faith, which is the great cõmandement of this everlasting Gospel; and that which we would first speak to, shal be this: What is the reason and ground that the Gospel conveyance of righteousness and life (and of the excellent things of this everlasting Covenant) should

ſhould be thorow the exerciſe of the grace of Faith; for it is not ſaid in the Scripture that Repentance juſtifieth, that Love juſtifieth, or that Mortification juſtifieth; but it is Faith only that juſtifieth, and it is Faith by which a Chriſtian inheriteth the promiſes? So that is clear that Faith is that conduit-pipe thorow which are conveyed to us the great bleſſings of this everlaſting Covenant.

I. And the firſt ground of it is this, it is thorow *Faith, that all our bleſſing may be known to be by love, and by free and unſearchable grace*; as is clear, *Rom.* 4. 16. while the Apoſtle is giving a reaſon why the inheritance is conveyed to a Chriſtian through Faith: *It is of faith*, ſaith he, *that it might be of grace*; for if the inheritance were conveyed to a Chriſtian thorow a covenant of works, then theſe ſpotleſs draughts of infinite love, and of unſearchable grace, ſhould not be written on our inheritance, as it is clear, *Rom.* 4. 25. And it is that great deſign of Chriſt to make his grace conſpicuous, in conveying ſalvation to us through Faith.

II. There is this ſecond ground likewiſe of it, that all the promiſes and bleſſings of this everlaſting Covenant might be ſure and ſtedfaſt to us; therefore they are conveyed to us through the exerciſe of the grace of Faith; as is clear, *Rom.* 4. 16. *They are of faith*, ſaith he, *that they might be ſure*: or as the word is, *that they might be ſetled*. When the promiſes of life and of eternal ſalvation were conveyed to us through mans obedience, were they not then moſt uncertain and unſtable? But is not

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Heaven your everlasting crown now, stedfast unto you, seeing ye have that golden pillar of Christ's everlasting righteousnes, to be the foundation of your Faith, and the strength of your confidenee in the day of need.

III. There is this third ground why the promises and excellent things of this Gospel are conveyed to a Christian through the exercise of Faith, that all boasting and gloriation might be excluded, according to that word, *Rom.* 3. 27. *By what law is boasting excluded, not by the law of works, but by the law of Faith.* And certainly, seeing Christians have all the great things of Heaven conveyed to them through the exercise of Faith, think ye not that this shal be your first song when ye shal be within the gates of that new *Jerusalem: Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thee doth belong the glory of our salvation.* O what a precious dignity were it but for an half hour to be admitted to hear those spotless songs that are sung by those thousād times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of holy Angels that are round about his Throne! Doth not *David* that sweet singer of *Israel*, now sing more sweetly then he did while he was here below? Doth not deserted *Heman* now chant forth the praises and everlasting songs of him that sitteth upon the Throne? And doth not afflicted *Job* now sing sweetly after his captivity is reduced, and he *entred within that land where the voice of joy and gladnes is continually heard?* Would ye have a description of Heaven? I could give it no term so suteable as this; Heaven

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is a reſt, without a reſt: for though there remain a reſt for the righteous, yet *Revel.* 4.8. *Theſe four beaſts that ſtand before the Throne, they reſt not night nor day, crying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty*; yet there is much divine quietneſs in that holy unquietneſs that is above.

IV. There is this laſt ground, why the bleſſings of the Goſpel, and life and righteouſneſs are conveyed to us through the exerciſe of Faith, that the way to attain to theſe things might be pleaſant and eaſie? We are certainly perſwaded that the way of winning to Heaven by a Covenant of works was much more unpleaſant and difficult; but it is not an eaſie way of *entering into the Holie of Holies*, to win unto it through the exerciſe of Faith. *Are not all wiſdoms wayes pleaſantneſs? And are not all her paths peace?* Was not that juſt ſelf-denial in one that ſaid, he would not take up a Crown though it were lying at his foot. But, oh! that curſed ſelf-denial doth poſſeſs the breaſts of many, ſo that though that Crown of immortal glory & eternal bleſſedneſs be lying at your feet, yet ye will not imbrace it, nor take it up: Is not the hatred of many to Chriſt covered with deceit? And therefore your *iniquity ſhal be declared before the Congregation.*

Now that what we have ſpoken upon this might be more clear, and that the nature of juſtifying Faith be not miſtaken, we would have you take notice of theſe things.

1. That the grace of Faith doth not juſtifie a Chriſtian as it is a work, or becaule of any inherent excell

excellency and dignity that is in this grace above any other graces of the Spirit; but Faith doth alone justifie a Christian, instrumentally and objectively; that is, it is that by which a Christian is just, by laying hold on the precious object of it, the righteousnes of Christ. And to clear this, we would only have you knowing this, that faith doth justifie as it closeth with Christ; but not because it closes with Christ, which some vainly are bold to assert, because there is not any dignity or worth in the act of Faith, in closing with Christ, that can be the foundation of our justification; else it were to confound that precious degree of free grace.

2. There is this that we would have you all knowing that Faith is not the instrument of justification (as justification is taken in an active sense) though it is the instrument of justification, as it is taken in a passive sense; and the ground of this conclusiō is this, because it is impossible that any action in man can be an instrument of any action in God; and therefore that phrase that you have so ordinarily spoken of, *that faith justifieth*, it is thus to be resolved, *that we are justified by faith.*

3. There is this that we would have you knowing, that betwixt a Christians closing by Faith with the righteousnes of Jesus Christ, & the justification of a sinner: I say, there is no natural & indispensible connexion between these two; but only there is a connexion of divine appointment, and of free grace; though we once conceive there is a natural aptitude in the grace of Faith to lay hold on the

the righteousnes of Christ, more then there is in any other grace of the Spirit, as ye may see there is a more natural aptitude and fitnes in the hand to receive then in any other organ of the body.

4. There is this also that we would have you knowing, that a Christian in his first closing with Christ, Christ (considered as crucified) is the immediat object of his Faith, and not Christ considered in his personal excellencies. Hence it is often in Scripture, that Christ as crucified, is holden forth as the immediat object of justifying Faith; as is clear, *Rom.* 3. 5. 24. 25. And the ground of this assertion is this, because that it is the formal object of justifying Faith, which doth formally justifie the sinner, and on which Faith doth immediately lay hold, as a ransome to satisfie Justice, and as a righteousnes in which the soul dare venture to be found, when it shal stand before the Judgement Seat of God: and certainly this is Christ, as obedient to the death of the cross. And it is likewise clear, that the thing which doth engage the soul to Christ, is not only because he is good in himself, but because he is good to us.

5. And there is this lastly, that we would have you knowing, that though Faith doth alone justifie, yet Faith doth not justifie being alone. Hence is that which we have so often in Schools, *Fides justificat solum, licet non solitarie*, that Faith justifieth alone, though not being alone, as *James* doth speak, *Faith without works is dead, and is of no effect.*

Now that which secondly we shal speak to, shal be

be this, to point out to you ſome differences betwixt juſtifying Faith which is in a real believer, and temporary Faith which is in an hypocrite, and one that is deſtitute of that everlaſting hope, though he do pretend to have it.

And firſt, that there is ſuch a thing as temporary Faith, as is clear from *Luke* 8. 13. it is ſaid there of ſome, *that they believed for a ſeaſon*; yea, in *Act.* 1. 13. it is ſaid of *Simon Magus* (who was in the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bond of iniquity) *he believed*. And thoſe in *John* 2. 23. *When they did behold the miracles, they believed on Jeſus Chriſt*; and yet we conceive that their Faith was not ſincere, & ſo this was not ſaving Faith. And indeed ye may ſee a difference betwixt theſe two in the very name *temporary*; for this is ſuch a Faith as doth not continue long with him that hath it, but doth evaniſh and paſs away: for as this is certain, *that an hypocrite will not alwayes call upon God*, *Job* 27. 10. ſo that is alſo certain, that an hypocrite will not always believe in God. I tell you, that the longeſt time an hypocrite doth keep his Faith, *Job* hath ſet down in his 18. chapter, ver. 14. *Their hope*, ſaith he, *ſhal bring them to the King of terrors, and then it ſhal be rooted out of them and their tabernacle*; their Faith will bring them no further then the gates of death, and then their Faith will flee away as a dream, and evaniſh as a viſion of the night.

II. There is this difference likewiſe betwixt them, that temporary Faith it cloſeth with Chriſt as a Savior, and for righteouſneſs; but it cloſeth not with

with Christ as a Prince, and for Sanctification: but justifying Faith taketh Christ as well for a Prince, as it taketh him for a Savior: and if *Solomon* did discern who was the true mother of the child, by that that she who would have had the child divided, was not the mother of the child; so we may say, that they who would divide Christ in his Offices, it is an evidence that they are not amongst those who are actually made partakers of the adoption of children: there is somewhat of this pointed at in *John* 6.66. where that which made many who were his Disciples (and did once believe) desert him, was because of the hardness of his command. *This is an hard saying, who can hear it?* And it is certain that it is a greater difficulty for a Christian to take Christ as a Prince, then as a Savior; for by that he must make an absolute resignation of himself over to Christ, never to be reduced. O! when saw you such a sight of Christ, that ye were constrained to cry out (without a complement) to him: *Truly, I am thy servant, I am thy servant?* O! were ye never ravished *with one of his eyes*, nor overtaken *with one chain of his neck?* Believe me, they who see him thus, do believe that *his commands are grievous.*

III. There is this difference, that temporary Faith is attained unto without the exercise of the Law; but justifying Faith is not attained to without some measure of the exercise of the Law: this is clear, *Mark* 4.5. where speaking of these temporary believers, it is said of them, *That the fruit did*

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immediatly spring up, &c. Are there not some (it may be here) who think they do believe, and yet were never in any measure trembling under the discovering & condemning power of the Law? Is not that a mystery, that one should bring forth without travelling? And is not this a mystery in Christianity, that one should believe before he hath found the pangs of the New birth? I am afraid of this, that many of us have taken up our Religion at our foot; for there are many who take up Religion, before Religion take them up. But would you know the properties of a Christian's Faith? *It is a begotten faith*, 1. *Pet.* 1. 2. and not a Faith that is taken up at our pleasure. And I would only say these two things to you, be perswaded of this, that hypocrisie may be spun with a very smal threed, so that the most discerning Christian cannot take up that desperate enimity that is in them. How long did *Judas* lurk under the name of a Saint, even with those that were most discerning? And there is this that we would say, that amongst all these *that shal be eternally excommunicate from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*, hypocrites in *Zion* shal have the bittereſt cup of divine indignation presented unto them. Hence it is that Christ when he would tell the worst company that one shal have in Hell, it is alwayes this, ye shal go to that place where hypocrites and sinners are; and so it would be of your concernment, that by the candle of the Lord ye would *search the inward part of the belly, before ye go down to the grave with a lie in your right hand*,

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a deceiving heart having turned you aside. We confeſs it is ſad to conſider thoſe anxious diſappointments that many in thoſe dayes ſhal once meet with.

IV. But there is this laſt difference betwixt juſtifying Faith and temporary Faith, that there are three precious effects of juſtifying Faith, which a temporary believer cannot win to.

1. To be denyed to all his enjoyments and attainments, and to walk humbly under them; for we may ſay that it is impoſſible for an hypocrite to be denyed to his enjoyments, he maketh ſuch a Deity of them, and worſhips them, or rather he worſhippeth himſelf in them. There are three great Graces that an hypocrite doth purſue after (though he rather ſeeketh them as gifts, then as Graces) Knowledge, Prayer, and Humility: And though it be but little he can attain of any of the three, (or rather nothing, in a ſaving way) yet leaſt of all can he attain to the laſt; yea, we may judge that there is alwayes within his boſome a ſtanding conviction, that he could never win unto that gracious Grace of Humility. O! could ye never win to this, to count your own righteouſneſs as filthy rags, and to rejoice alone in the righteouſneſs of a crucified Savior? I would preſs this upon you by the way, (O Chriſtians of this generation) forget your perfections, and remember your imperfections; have an holy oblivion of your attainments, but have a divine remembrance of your ſhortcomings; look more to what is before unperfected, then

then to what is behind, and thus shal you evidence true justifying Faith.

2. It is an effect of justifying Faith, to be under some constant and divine impression of the preciousness of Jesus Christ, according to that word, 1. *Pet.* 2. 7. *To you who believe, Christ is precious:* it is not said that Christ was precious, or shal be precious; but it is said, *he is precious*, which doth import (as we use to speak) a continued act: Did ye never know what it was to dwel twenty four hours under the impression of the matchless excellency and precious worth of a crucified Savior? I will pose you with this; Are there not some here (and else where) that pass under the notion of Saints, that never knew what it was to dwel half an hour under these high and elevating thoughts of the preciousness of Jesus Christ? So that we profess we cannot tell whether we shal call him precious or undervalued; but we may conjoin these two together, that he is a precious, and yet undervalued Christ.

3. By justifying Faith, a Christian winneth to mortification of his invisible and predominant lusts, which is impossible for a temporary believer to win to. And is there not a great difference betwixt an Idol when it is cast out, and an Idol when it but goeth out? I will tell you the great mortification of hypocrites, the Devil was living in them as one that was a black one, and now he cometh again and transformeth himself into an Angel of light: He was living in them before by his spirit of prophanity, and now he liveth in them by the spirit of

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hypocriſie, and counterfeiting of thoſe things that were never clear attainments, while it is the noble dignity of Faith, *Acts* 15. 9. *to purifie the heart*: but are there not many here who never knew what it was to mortifie one luſt for Chriſt? Can ſuch a deluſion overtake you, O Atheiſts! that ye ſhal reign with Chriſt, if ye die not with him? There is an opinion vented in theſe dayes, that there may be repentance in Heaven; and I think it would ſeem that the Chriſtians of this age have much of that opinion, we are ſo little in repentance while we are here below: but know that Faith and Sanctification are two inſeparable companions: And let me tell you, if you will know the compend of the precious exerciſe of Faith, it is this: Faith hath three great things that it perpetually contemplats & views. 1. Faith looketh to the promiſe, and there it doth rejoice and reſt upon it. 2. Faith looketh to the duties that are commanded, and there it cryeth out; *Here am I, I will obey and hearken unto the voice of the Word.* And 3. Faith looketh to the crown, and there it doth exult and ſweetly rejoice in divine expectation. And, O what a ſight is that, to behold that everlaſting Prince ſtanding at the end of our race, having a crown in his right hand, with this Motto engraven on it, *He that perſevereth to the end, ſhal be ſaved?* And what a Faith, ſuppoſe ye, it ſhal be thought, when we ſhal get on that immortal crown of bleſſedneſs? What think ye is the exerciſe of thoſe that are above? O Heaven! Heaven! if we did know it! would we not be in

an holy extasie of desire, till we were there? And blessed be he eternally, that hath purchased that precious felicity to us.

Now we shal at this time shut up our discourse, by speaking a little to those things in which a Christian doth ordinarily meet with assurance of his interest in God, and is put to the divine actings of the Grace of Faith; for there are some sealing times to a Christian.

I. The first time of the sealing is, after the mortification of some predominant lust and Idol; then they are admitted to read their names in the precious and ancient records of Heaven, and to see in these books their unworthy names written by the hand of that everlasting Prince. This is clear, *Rev.* 2. 17. *To him that overcometh, will I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, that no man knowes saving he that receiveth it.* And from that, 2. *Tim.* 4. 8. Believe me, more mortification would make more believing; but would ye know the original of misbelief? It is the want of exercise of spiritual mortification of our lusts. I know not where the most part of us intendeth to lodge at night; but this is certain, that we live with much contentment with our lusts, and these predominant Idols that do so much possess us.

II. It is, secondly, a sealing time to a Christian, when he is admitted to the divine enjoyment of these satisfying delights that are to be found in Christ: When was it that the Spouse cryed out so often, *My beloved is mine, and I am his?* Was it

not when *she was brought to the banqueting, and his banner over her was love?* Believe me, more communion with an absent Christ, would make more intimation (in a divine manner) of our peace with him. We desire to bless those that are above the reach of all these disputings and questions that we are so much subject unto.

III. This is a sealing time to a Christian, when he is much in the exercise of secret prayer, and of much conversing, and corresponding with God in that duty, as is clear in that word from *Dan.* 2. 23. When *Daniel* was praying at the evening oblation, in the 23. verse, he meets with a divine intimation of his peace with God; *O man, greatly beloved of God*, as the Original hath it, *O man of great desires*; for he was desirable indeed; and precious to him who holdeth the Saints in his right hand.

IV. This is also a sealing time to a Christian, when he is called to the exercise of some great work, and is to be put upon some eminent holy imployment; this is clear, *Jer.* 1. 5. where *Jeremiah* being called to preach the Gospel unto such a rebellious people, then he hath his eternal election declared unto him: *Before thou wast formed in the womb, I knew thee.* Christ, as it were, giveth them that, to be meat to them for fourty dayes, and that in the strength of it, they may go many a dayes journey.

V. There is also another sealing time, when a Christian is first begotten to a precious and everlasting hope; for when at first Christians begin to be

acquainted with Chriſt, even then ſometimes he declareth to them his boundleſs & everlaſting love. And this is the ground why ſome of thoſe who are but babes in Chriſt, are ſo much in the exerciſe of diligence, ſo much in the exerciſe of the grace of love, and ſo much in the exerciſe of the grace of tenderneſs; it is even becauſe of the ſolemn impreſſion of their intereſt in Chriſt, that as it were, they are dayly taken in to read their own names in legible letters, in the Lambs book of life.

VI. And there is that laſt time, that is a ſealing time to a Chriſtian, and that is, when he is put under ſome ſad and afflicting diſpenſation: *When the furnace is hot ſeven times more then ordinary:* Then doth God condeſcend to manifeſt himſelf to his own. When was it that *John* met with moſt of the revelations of Heaven? Was it not when he was in the *Ile of Patmos, for the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt his Kingdom, and patience of our bleſſed Lord? Rev.* 1. 9. And that place, 2. *Cor.* 4. 16. *Though our outward man decay, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.*

Now we would preſs you to be more ſerious in the exerciſe of this precious grace. And I ſhal tell you the cõpend of Chriſtianity in theſe few words. 1. By Faith to ſolace your ſelves in Chriſts inviſible vertues and excellencies. And 2. by hope, to be viewing that precious crown, and thoſe everlaſting dignities that are to be given to the Saints. And 3. by mortification, to be crucifying your idols. And 4. by patience, to be poſſeſſing your ſouls, untill

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once ye shal pass through that dark land, to the valley of everlasting delight. And as for those that contemn and undervalue the blood of this everlasting Covenant (and I would have all those that delight not in closing with Christ, and those who have not misbelief, as their cross, to consider this) *The wrath of the living and eternal God doth abide upon them who do not believe*; according to that word, *John* 3. 36. *He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him.* It is a remarkable phrase; because of this the wrath of God will not be a pilgrim to a misbeliever, that will turn aside to tarry but for a night; but the wrath of God (to them who will not believe) shal be their houshold companion, and shal dwel with them: And wo, wo to them eternally, who have this sad and everlasting companion to abide with them, *the wrath of a living God.* There is one thing we would have those knowing, that amongst all those who are eternally to be debarred from Jesus Christ, misbelievers are put in the formost rank, *Rev.* 21.8. There he is to put away *the fearful and unbelieving.* And from 2. *Thess.* 1. 18. *When Christ shal come from Heavsn, with ten thousand of his Saints*; What to do? It is even *to execute vengeance on those that obey not the truth of the Gospel.* That is, who do not believe; and I pose your own hearts with this, whether or not your names be written there in that roll, amongst those who shal be cut off? And that word, 2. *Thess.* 2. 12. *That they might be damned who believed not, but took pleasure in unrighteousness.* O but the wrath of a

dying Chriſt, and of a crucified Savior, is dreadful! It is more ſad and terrible then the wrath of God ſhould have been, if Chriſt had not died. I will tell you (O hypocrites in *Sion*) the worſt news that ever was publiſhed in your ears, and it is this, Chriſt died and roſe again; and to thoſe that are begotten to a lively hope, they are glad tidings of great joy, and therein they may comfort themſelves; but ye may wear a rough garment to deceive, and go to Heaven in your own apprehenſions; but, O the ſad diſappointments that is vvaiting on many ſuch. And to cloſe vvith this, vve vvould obteſt you, as you vvould anſwer to your terrible and dreadful Judge, that ſhal ſtand one day upon his Throne, vvhich he ſhal fix in the clouds; vve obteſt you by all the joyes of Heaven, and vve obteſt you by all the everlaſting pains of Hell; and vve obteſt you by all the curſes that are vvritten in the volume of this book, and by all the ſweet and comfortable promiſes that are in the everlaſting Goſpel, and by the love that you owe to your immortal ſouls; and as you would not crucifie Chriſt afreſh, believe and embrace the offers vvhich are preſented now unto you. Know ye vvhether or not this ſhal be the laſt ſummonds that you ſhal get to believe? That ſo, if ye do reject it, Chriſt ſhal come from Heaven, and pronounce that ſad and lamentable Sentence to you, *Depart from me ye curſed, I know you not.* Now to him that can bleſs theſe things unto you, we deſire to give praiſe.

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SERMON III.

JOHN 3. 23. *This is his Commandement, that ye ſhould believe on the Name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.

IT was a command that *Solomon* gave unto his ſon, *Prov.* 22. 26. *That he ſhould not be ſurety for debt, nor be one of thoſe that ſtriketh hands:* But O! what ſpotleſs breaches of that command hath our bleſſed Lord Jeſus committed, when he did condeſcend to be ſurety for our debt, & to pay that which was impoſſible for us to ſatisfie? Hath not Chriſt made a precious exchange with ſinners? He wreathed about his own precious neck that bond and yoke of our iniquities, and hath given to us that unweariable, eaſie and portable yoke of his commandements, amongſt which this is one, *that we ſhould believe on him:* ſpotleſs *Chriſt was made ſin for us*, that ſinful *we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him:* And is not this the condemnation of the world, *that we will not believe on him?* That we will not delight our ſelves in loving of him? And I would ſay this to you, that though ye ſhould weep the one half of your dayes, and pray the other half, yet if ye want this noble grace of Faith, *your righteouſneſs ſhal be but like a menſtruous cloath, and filthy rags before him.* For what is praying without believing, but a taking of his bleſſed Name in vain? What is our conferring upon the moſt divine and precious truths of God without believing?

Is it not a lying to the Holy Ghost, and a flattering of God with our mouth? And we would have you knowing this, that there is a sweet harmony that is now made up betwixt *Moses* and *Christ*, betwixt the Law and the Gospel. The Law bringeth us to *Christ* as a Savior, and *Christ* bringeth us back again to the Law, to be a rule of our walk, to which we must subject our selves. So then, would ye know the compend of a *Christian's* walk? *It is a sweet travelling betwixt Mount Sinai, and Mount Sion, betwixt Moses and Christ, betwixt the Law and the Gospel.* And we conceive, that the more deep that the exercise of the Law be in a Christians conscience, before his closing with *Christ*, there is so much the more precious and excellent advantage waiting for him.

I. There is this advantage that waiteth on the deep exercise of the Law, that it is the way to win to much establishment in Faith, when once we begin to close with Christ. O Christians! would ye know that which maketh the superstructure & building of grace to be within you, as *a bowing wall, and as a tottering fence?* (so that oftentimes ye are in hazard to raze the foundation) it is this, ye were not under the exercise of the Law before your believing in Jesus Christ. There are some who do not abide three dayes at Mount *Sinai*, and these shall not dwel many dayes at Mount *Sion*.

II. There is this advantage that waiteth on the deep exercise of the Law, it maketh Christ precious to a man's soul. What is that which filleth the soul

of a Christian with many high & excellent thoghts of Christ? Is is not this, to have the Law registrating our Bond, and putting us (as we use to speak) to the Horn? That is, to have the Law cursing us, and using the sentence of condemnation against us. That which maketh us have such low and undervaluing thoughts of precious Christ, is, because the most part of us are not acquainted with the deep and serious exercise of the Law; that is a mystery to the most part of a Christian's practice. Ye know that there were four streams which went out from the Paradise of God, into which man was first placed; and so may we say, that there are four golden streams, by which lost and destroyed, man is brought back again to this *Eden* & Paradise of everlasting delights. First, there is the precious stream of Christ's righteousnes, by which we must be justified. And secondly, there is that stream of his Sanctification, by which we must be purified. Thirdly, there is that stream of the wisdome of Christ, by which we must be conducted through this wilderness wherein we have lost our way. And fourthly, there is that stream of Christ's Redemption, by which we must be delivered from the power of our enemies, and must turn the battel in the gate; it is by the Redemption of Christ, that we shal once sing that triumphant song: *O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory?* O but all these streams will be sweet and refreshing to a soul that is hotly pursued by the Law: So long as we see not the uglines of our leprosie in that glass of the

Law, vve have our own *Abana* and *Parphar* that vve think may do our turn; but vvhen once our caſe is truly laid open to us, then vvill vve be content to vvaſh our ſelves in *Jordan* ſeven times.

III. There is this advantage that waiteth on the deep exerciſe of the Law, that it maketh a Chriſtian live conſtantly under the impreſſion of the ſinfulneſs of ſin. What is it that maketh ſin exceeding ſinful to a Chriſtian? Is it not this, he hath been fourty dayes in *Moſes* School? And we conceive that the ground why ſuch fools as we make a mock of ſin, is, becauſe we know not what it is to be under the power of his wrath, and the apprehenſions of the indignation of God.

But now to come to that which we intend to ſpeak of, we told you at the firſt occaſion that we ſpake upon theſe words, that there were many excellent things concerning the grace of Faith holden forth in them: The firſt thing which was holden forth concerning this radical grace of Faith, was the infinite advantage that redoundeth to a Chriſtian through the exerciſe of Faith, and giving obedience to this command; which we cleared, to be holden forth not only from the ſcope, but alſo from the nature of this command. And now to ſpeak a little to the point, we ſhal propoſe theſe conſiderations that may abundantly ſhow how advantagious a thing this excellent grace of Faith is.

I. The firſt conſideration that ſpeaketh it, is this, that Faith maketh Chriſt precious to a ſoul, according to that word, 1. *Peter* 2. 7. *To you that believe*

believe Christ is precious. And we would have you knowing this, that Faith maketh Christ more precious to a soul, then sense, or any other thing can make him. And first, Faith maketh Christ more precious then sense, because the estimation which the grace of Faith hath of Christ, it is builded upon the excellency of his Person; but the estimation of sense, it is builded upon the excellency of his actings; so that because he is such to them, therefore they love and esteem him: But that heroick grace of Faith, it taketh up the excellency of Christs person, & that maketh him precious to them. Secondly, Faith makes Christ more precious then sense, because sense looketh to that love which Christ manifesteth in his face, and in his hands, and in his feet: But Faith looketh to that love which is in his heart. Sense will cry forth: *Who is like to thee, whose countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedar; whose hands are as gold rings, set with beril, and whose legs are like pillars of marble, set in sockets of gold?* Sense will look to the smylings of Christ, and will wonder; it will look to his dispensations and actings, and will be constrained to cry out, *Who is like unto thee?* But the grace of Faith solaceth it self in the fountain from whence all these springs & sweet inundations of love do flow. Thirdly, Faith maketh Christ more precious then sense, because Faith looketh not only to what Christ is presently, but unto what Christ is from eternity before time, and what Christ shal be unto eternity after time; but sense only doth look to what Christ

is presently. And ye must conceive that the sweet travelling of Faith betwixt infinite love from eternity before, and infinite love unto eternity after, must make Faith to fall in a sea of wondering, and raiseth the thoughts to the highest pitch of desire & estimation. Fourthly, we may likewise adde that the impression of the preciousnes of Christ, which sense maketh upon the soul, is not so constant, nor so single, as that which Faith doth make. O but the grace of Faith giveth the Christian a broad look of Christ, and letteth him see Christ cloathed with ornaments of glory and divine Majesty. Sense followeth Christ, rather that it may see his miracles and love, that it may be fed with loaves; but Faith follows Christ, for himself, above all.

II. The second consideration, to speak the advantage of it, is, that the grace of Faith, it hath, as it were, an arbitrary power with God; so that *whatsoever a Christian shal seek in Faith, he shal receive it.* It was the noble gift that was once given to Faith, that it never should seek any thing and be denied, according to that word in *Matth.* 21. 22. *And all things whatsoever ye shal ask in prayer believing, ye shal receive it.* And that word in *John* 15.7. *Abide in me*, that is believe; and the *promise*, is annexed to this: *Whatsoever ye shal ask, ye shal receive.* And it is clear likewise from the preceeding verse to our Text, that if we obey this cõmand of Faith, *Whatsoever we shal ask of God, we shal receive it.* And I would speak these two things to you from this. First, that ostentimes Christ putteth a blank in a

Christ.

Christians hand, who is much in the exercise of Faith, according to that in *Matth.* 20. 32. Is there not an ample blank put into that man's hand? *What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?* Christ desireth him to fill up the blank with what he would. And secondly, there is this, which is one of the greatest steps of Christ's matchless condescendency, that oftentimes when his own have sought in their presumption a blank to be put in their hand, Christ condescendeth to give it, according to that strange passage in *Mark* 10. 35. 36. the two Disciples who present this desire to Christ, we desire, say they, *that whatsoever we ask, thou shouldest give it unto us.* And presently that is answered: *What will ye that I shal do for you?* Christ hath an infinite good will to satisfie the desires of his own: and that which yet more speaketh out Christ boundless good will to satisfie the desires of all that belong to him, it may be declared in that word, *John* 16. 24. where he chargeth his Disciples with this: *Hitherto*, saith he, *have ye asked me nothing*: ye must not suppose that *Peter, James & John* never sought a suite of Christ; but the meaning of that expression is this: Ye sought nothing in comparison of that which I was willing to give, and which your necessity did call for at my hands, which ye should have sought.

III. There is this third consideration, to point out the advantage of Faith: it is that grace that keepeth all the graces of the Spirit in life and exercise. Faith is that higher wheel, at the motion of which, all the lower wheels do move: if so we may speak,

Faith is that *Primum mobile*, that first moves and turns about all these lower graces of the Spirit, according to that, 2. *Pet.* 1. 5. *Adde to your faith, vertue, and to your vertue, patience, and to your patience, brotherly kindnes.* First, the grace of Faith keepeth in exercise the grace of love, as is clear, *Eph.* 3. 17. where these two graces are conjoined: As likewise from *Rom.* 5. 1. compared with *vers* 5. *Being justified by Faith.* Then this effect followeth upon it, *the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts*: And so it is certain; that Faith keepeth love in life. Faith being the spy of the soul, and that intelligencer and precious messenger, it goeth out and bringeth in objects unto love. Faith draweth aside the vail, and love sitteth down and solaceth it self in the discoveries of Faith. Secondly, the grace of Faith likewise it keepeth the grace of mortification in exercise, as is clear, not only from *Eph.* 6. 9. but from 1. *John* 5. 4. *This is our victory whereby we overcome the world, even our Faith.* And it is certain that Faith keepeth mortification in exercise, and advanceth holiness, not only because of this, that Faith is that grace that presenteth to a Christian the absolute purity and spotless holiness of Jesus Christ; but also because it maketh them esteem their Idols tasteless as the white of an egge, and they become unto them as their sorrowful meat. The best principle of mortification is this, the discoveries of the invisible vertues of Jesus Christ: that mortification which ariseth from the lovely discoveries of the excellency of Jesus Christ,

is moſt real and abiding; as thoſe waters which riſe from the higheſt ſprings, are not only conſtant, but likewiſe moſt deep and excellent. Thirdly, Faith likewiſe hath influence upon mortification, as it doth take hold of that infinite ſtrength that is in Chriſt, by which a Chriſtian is inabled to mortifie his corruptions. Fourthly, Faith likewiſe maketh application *of the blood of ſprinkling*, by which we are purified from dead works. Fifthly, likewiſe the grace of Faith keepeth in exerciſe the grace of Humility, as is clear, *Rom.* 3. 27. *By what Law*, ſaith he, *is boaſting excluded? It is not by the Law of works, but by the Law of Faith.* Sixthly, Faith keepeth in exerciſe the grace of joy, as is clear, *Rom.* 15. 13. *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing*: So that ye ſee the proper fruit of Faith, is *joy in the holy Ghoſt.* And certainly did we believe more, we ſhould rejoyce more. Seventhly, and laſtly, Faith keepeth in exerciſe the grace of hope; for it is impoſſible for hope to be in lively exerciſes, except Faith once be exerciſed, which may be a ſhame unto you; for how can we hope to attain the thing that is promiſed, except our Faith firſt cloſe with the promiſe? So there is this difference betwixt the grace of Faith, and the grace of Hope; the grace of Fath cloſeth with the promiſes, but the grace of Hope, it cloſth with the thing that is promiſed.

IV. There is this fourth conſideration, that may ſpeak out the excellency of the grace of Faith. It is that grace by which a Chriſtian doth attain to moſt

moſt divine fellowſhip, & conſtant correſpondency with Heaven. Would ye have that queſtion reſolved and determined, What is the beſt way *not to ſtir up our Beloved, nor awake him until he pleaſe?* It is this be much in the grace of Faith; this is clear from *Epheſ.* 3. 17. *That Chriſt may dwel in your hearts by Faith.* By the exerciſe of all other graces, Chriſt is but a ſojourner, *that turneth aſide to tarry but for a night;* but by the exerciſe of this grace, he cometh to take up houſe with us. I will tell you what Faith is, it is a ladder that reacheth betwixt Heaven and earth, by the ſteps of which, a Chriſtian doth dayly go up to Heaven, and converſe with the higher Houſe. Faith is that grace, as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh, by which we have acceſs to the Throne of his grace. Faith uſhers in the believer to the Throne; and without it, he can have no acceſs there, nor joy when he is there.

V. Here is this advantage that attendeth the exerciſe of Faith, a believing Chriſtian is a praying Chriſtian, according to that word in *Mark* 9. 24. where theſe two are conjoined together, *Lord, I believe;* and then he falleth to his prayer preſently, after that confeſſion, *Help thou our unbelief.* And it is clear from *Pſal.* 63. 1. *O God, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee; my ſoul thirſteth for thee.* And ſometimes Faith is a moſt impatient grace; but we may always ſay of it, that it is a moſt diligent grace. Oh! is not the neglect of this precious exerciſe of Faith, and of the duty of ſecret prayer, that makes our leanneſs teſtifie to our face, and maketh our ſoule

ſeuls as a barren wilderneis? I am perſwaded of this, that ſince Chriſt had any followers, and ſince ever this everlaſting Goſpel was preached in Paradiſe, the exerciſe of ſecret prayer was never ſo much neglected; we have turned over all our prayers into complements with God. We know not what it is *to riſe at mid-night and call upon God, and to enquire after our Maker under the ſilent watches of the night.* O but it is a ſweet diverſion from ſleep, to retire our ſelves, in the ſilent ſeaſons of the night, from all thoughts about worldly matters, and to converſe with that inviſible Majeſty.

VI. There is this ſixth conſideration, to point out the advantage of Faith, that Faith is that grace that doth facilitate a Chriſtians obedience, and maketh it moſt pleaſant and eaſie; this is clear from *Heb.* 11.8. *By faith Abraham, when cõmanded to go to a ſtrange land, obeyed, and went out, not knowing whether he went.* The word may be rendred, *he did chearfully obey.* And verſ. 17. *By faith he offered up his only ſon.* Would ye know the reaſon why his commands are your burden? And why his precepts are your croſſes? It is becauſe of this, *ye do not believe.* And ſo it is moſt certain that it is impoſſible for a Chriſtian to attain to a pleaſant way of obedience without the exercile of Faith: Faith holdeth up the crown to a Chriſtian, & this crown maketh him to obey. Faith gathereth ſtrength from Chriſt, and that ſtrength maketh obedience very eaſie. Faith taketh up the excellency of Chriſt, and this maketh a Chriſtian to look upon his duty,

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more as his dignity, then his duty. And we are perſwaded of this, that our chariot-wheel ſhould move more ſwiftly (*like the chariots of Aminadab*) if we were more in the exerciſe of the grace of Faith. Would ye know an anſwer to that queſtion, what is firſt more requiſite for a Chriſtian while here below? Faith. And what ſecondly, is moſt requiſite? Faith. And what thirdly, is moſt requiſite for a Chriſtian? Even Faith. Faith above all things, and above all things, Faith.

VII. There is another advantage of it, that by Faith our ſervices and prayers are accepted of God. Would ye know what is the prayer of a Chriſtian that is not in Faith? *It is a ſmoak in his noſtrils, and a fire that burneth all the day. The unbelievers ſacrifice is an abomination to the Lord:* this is clear from *Heb.* 11. 4. *By Faith Abel offered up unto God a more acceptable ſacrifice then Cain:* and we conceive that there are many unanſwered prayers which we do put up, becauſe we want that noble exerciſe of Faith.

VIII. And laſtly, we ſhal likewiſe adde this, that Faith is the grace by which a Chriſtian hath that perfect and immediate ſight, as it were, of great things that are promiſed to him. Faith bringeth a Chriſtian within ſight of Heaven, and Faith bringeth a Chriſtian within ſight of God, according to that word, *Heb.* 11.1. *Faith is the evidence of things not ſeen:* And that noble Paradox that is ſaid of Faith, *Heb.* 11. 27. *By Faith Moſes ſaw him that is invisible.* Is it not an impoſſible thing to ſee that which

which cannot be seen? But the meaning of it is this, that faiths discoveries of God are as certain and sure as the discoveries of our bodily eyes are. Faith is an intelligent grace, yea, it is a most sure and infallible grace. What will Faith not do? And what can you do who want faith?

Now to enforce the advantages and excellencies of Faith a little more, we shal propose to you the disadvantages of that woful sin of unbelief.

1. There is this disadvantage of the sin of unbelief, that all the actions that proceed from an unbeliever, they are impure and defiled, according to that in *Tit.* 1. 15. *But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled, their prayer is unclean*; yea, as *Solomon* speaketh, *their plowing is sin*; yea, their going about the most excellent duties (for matter) is an abomination to God, according to that word, *Rom.* 14.23. *What ever is not of faith, is sin.* So the want of faith is the great polluter of all our actions, and of all our performances.

2. There is this second disadvantage of misbelief, that it is impossible for one in the exercise of unbelief to mortifie a lust or Idol; and we may allude unto those words in *Mat.* 17.20. when his Disciples came to him, and asked him this question, *Why could not we cast out this devil?* That was given as an answer, *Because of your unbelief.* Unbelief is that which taketh up arms for our Idols, and doth most strongly defend them; for there is nothing that will kill corruption so much as the exercise

of

of Faith; and vvhen that is laid aſide, vve have laid by our vveapons, and have in a manner concluded a treaty of peace with our Idols that we ſhal not offend them, if they do not offend us.

3. There is this diſadvantage that waiteth upon the ſin of unbelief, that ſuch an one cannot win nor attain to the grace of eſtabliſhment, *but is alwayes as the waves of the ſea toſſed to and fro*, untill once he win to the exerciſe of Faith, as is clear from *Iſai.* 7. 9. *Except ye believe, ye ſhal not be eſtabliſhed.*

4. There is this diſadvantage that waiteth on it, it is the mother of hardneſs and ſtupidity of heart, according to that word in *Mark* 16. 14. where he upbraideth them becauſe of their unbelief, and then that danger followeth, to wit, *hardneſs of heart*; this is clear alſo from *Acts* 19. 9. where theſe two ſiſter-devils are conjoined and locked together, *unbelief and hardneſs of heart*; becauſe it is unbelief indeed that hindereth all the graces, by which the grace of tenderneſs muſt be maintained.

5. There is this diſadvantage in the ſin of unbelief, that it is big with child of apoſtaſie from God, and of defection from him, according to that word, *Heb.* 3. 12. *Beware leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief* (and there the fruit of it) *to depart from the living God.* And certainly it is no wonder that unbelief travels in birth, till that curſed child of apoſtaſie be brought forth; not only becauſe of this, that an unbeliever looſeth the thoghts of the excellency of Chriſt, but alſo becauſe he

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increaseth in his thoughts of love towards his Idols; for Christ doth decrease in those who misbelieve, and their Idols do increase in their love, and in their desires, and in their estimation.

6. There is this sixth disadvantage in the sin of unbelief, it hindereth the communication of many signal workings and tokens of the love and favor of the most High, according to that sad word that is in *Matth.* 13. 58. at the close, *He could not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.* Unbelief, as it were, laid a restraint on Christ, that he could not effectuat those things which he was willing to perform. And to shut up our discourse at this time, I would only adde these two aggravations which may somewhat enforce what we have spoken: I say, there are these two aggravations in the sin of unbelief, even in his own who have a right (and also his call) to believe. 1. That after that Christ hath given most sensible discoveries of himself, (*Wherein we have seen him*, as it were, *face to face*) yet ye will not believe. This is clear from *John* 6. 36. *Though ye have seen me*, saith Christ, *yet ye do not believe in me.* There is not a manifestation of Christ's presence, but it is a witness against you of your unbelief: Would you hear the voice of sense that is rectified? It is this, believe on the Son of God. 2. That notwithstanding of the signal demonstrations of the power of Christ, yet though it were the mortifying of some lust and Idol within them, yet they will not believe, but upon new temptations will doubt of his love to them. Christ

preach

preacheth Faith by his Word; he preacheth Faith by his sufferings, he preacheth faith by his dispensations, he preacheth Faith by his promises, he preacheth Faith by his rods; and if these five instruments will not ingage your hearts to believe, what can move them? Doth not his two wounds in his precious hands preach out this point of Faith, Believe him? Doth not that hole opened in his side preach this doctrine, *That we should believe in him*? And these two wounds that he received in his precious feet, do they not preach this, *That we should believe on a crucified Savior*? And we would only say this, that sometimes it is the case of his own, that after the convictions of this, that it is their duty to believe, and also after some desires to close with Christ, yet they find inability to close with him. Is it not certain that to will (*To believe*) is sometime present with you; but how to perform you know not? And I would have a christian making this four-fold use of such a dispensation as that (which is most ordinarily) when convictions of our duty to believe, and some desires to close with Christ, is not followed with actual performances.

1. To study to have your convictions more deeply rooted within you, for it doth sometimes follow, that resolutions and mints to believe, are not blest with actual believing, because the conviction of our duty to believe, is not deeply imprinted upon our conscience.

2. Be convinced of that desperate enmity (*and that*

that myſtery of iniquity) that is within you, that ye can have ſome will to do, without ability to perform. We confeſs, it is not an ordinary diſeaſe in theſe dayes, to have ſuch a contrariety betwixt a chriſtians will & his practice; our will for the moſt part being no better than our practice, but ſometimes it is, which may make you cry forth, *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this body of death?*

3. That ye would be much in the imploying of Chriſt, that as he hath given you to will, ſo alſo he might make you to do. Chriſt is about to convince his own in ſuch a diſpenſation as that, *That Faith is the gift of God*; Faith is ſo noble a grace that it cannot be ſpinned out from our reſolutions, nor from our endeavors, Faith is ſuch a divine plant, *as the Fathers right hand muſt plant in our ſouls.*

4. Let it convince you of the excellency of the grace of Faith (for the difficulty of attaining to any thing may ſpeak out the excellency of that thing) there is no ſin but it may be eaſily winn at, there is an eaſineſs and facility to overtake the paths of our Idols, but the graces of the ſpirit are ſo excellent things, that we muſt fight before we attain them. And you who are ſtrangers to Chriſt Jeſus (and have never known what it is to cloſe with him) we would requeſt you in Chriſt's name to be reconciled to him. What know ye, O men (or rather Atheiſts) but this ſhal be the laſt ſummons that ye ſhall get to believe? And that becauſe be diſobey this precious ſummons, there ſhall be one preſented

to

to you, that ye cannot ſit. I remember of one man who looking upon many thouſands that were under his command, weeped over them when he conſidered, how that within a few years all theſe ſhould be laid in their graves, and ſhould be in eternity. O but it were much of our concernment to be trying our ſelves how it is with us; we are not afraid that it is a breach of charity, to wiſh, that but one of each ten that are within theſe doors, were heirs of the grace of life, and had the ſolide and ſpirituall expactation of heaven. I think, if Chriſt were to come preſently to ſpeak to us, He might not only ſay to each twelve that are here, *One of you ſhall betray me*; but we are afraid that He ſhould ſay to each twelve that are here, *Eleven of you ſhall betray me, and but one only ſhall paſs free.* O doth it not concern you to enquire where you ſhall reſt at night, when the long ſhadows of the everlaſting evening ſhall be ſtreached out upon you? I think there are ſome that are ſo ſettled upon their lees, that if they were one day in hell, and ſaw all the torments that are there, and were brought from it the next day to live on earth, they would not repent: And more, there are ſome that take them up one day to ſee the joyes of heaven, and bring them back again, they would not purſue after theſe bleſſed and everlaſting enjoyments. O is not Chriſt much undervalued by us? But I muſt tell you this, *One wo is paſt, but behold another wo is coming.* O the ſearchings of thoſe ſpirits who are entered into their everlaſting priſon-houſe, out of which there is no redemption.

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What shall be your choise, when Christ shall come in the clouds! I am perswaded there are many, to whom at that day, this doctrine would be ravishing, viz. *That there were not a death, that there were not a God, and that there were not an eternity.* Oh! will you believe, *That the sword of the justice of God is bathed in heaven, and shall come down to make a sacrifice, not in the land of* Idumea, *nor in the land of* Bozra; *but he is to make a sacrifice amongst his people, who seemed to make a Covenant with him by sacrifice.* Ah, ah, shal we say that if that argument were used to many, that within fourty dayes they should be at their long and everlasting home, they would yet spend thirty nine of those dayes in taking pleasure upon their lusts. I am perswaded of this, that there are many who think that the way betwixt heaven and earth, is but one dayes journy; they think they can believe in one day, and triumph at night: But O it shall be short triumphing that such believers as those shall have. Therefore, O study to close with a crucified Savior; rest on him by Faith, delight your selves in him with love, and let your souls be longing for the day when that voice shall be heard in heaven (O how sweetly will it be sung) *Arise, arise, arise, my love, my dove, my fair one and come away; for behold your winter is past, your everlasting summer is come; and the time of the singing of the birds is near.* When Christ shall come over these mountains of *Bether*, he shall cry, *Behold I come*, and the soul shall sweetly answer, *Come, Blessed Lord Jesus, come.* O what a life shall it be,

that

that with thoſe two arms you ſhould eternally incircle Chriſt, and hold him in your arms, or rather be incircled by him? *Wait for him, for he ſhal come, and his reward is with him*, and he ſhall once take home the wearied travellers of hope.

SERMON IV.

JOHN 3. 23. *This is his Commandement, that ye ſhould believe on the Name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, &c.*

THere are two great and excellent gifts which God in the depth of his boundleſs love, hath beſtowed on his own. Firſt, There is that infinite gift, and royall donation, his own beloved Son Jeſus Chriſt, which is called, *The gift of God*, Joh. 4. 10. And ſecondly, there is that excellent gift of the grace of Faith, which God hath beſtowed upon his own, which is alſo called, *The gift of God*, Eph. 2. 8. *Faith is the gift of God*; And is it not certain, that theſe two gracious gifts ought to engage our ſouls and hearts much unto him? Infinite Majeſty could give no gift greater than his Son, and infinite poverty could receive no other gift ſo ſutable as Chriſt: It was the moſt noble gift that heaven could give, and it is the greateſt advantage for earth to receive it. And we could wiſh that the moſt part of the ſtudy and practice of men (that is ſpent in purſuit after theſe low and tranſient vanities) might be once taken up in that precious purſuit after Chriſt; We could wiſh that all the queſtions and debates

debates of the time were turned over into a soul-concerning question, *What shall we do to be saved?* and that all the questions, controversies and contensions of the times were turned over into that divine contention, and heavenly debate, *Who should be most for Christ, who should be most for the exalting of the noble and excellent plant of renown?* and that all our judgings and searchings of other mens practices and estates, might be turned over into the usefull search, to *prove and examine our selves whether we be in the Faith or not:* And I would ask you this question, What are your thoughts concerning precious Christ, seeing he is that noble object of Faith? We would only have you take along these things, by which Christ may be much commended to your hearts. First, There was never any that with the eyes of Faith did behold the matchless beauty and transcendent worth of that crucified Saviour, that returned his enemy: There is soul-conquering vertue in the face of Christ, and there is heart-captivating and overcoming power in the beauty of Jesus Christ. This first sight that ever persecuting *Saul* got of Christ, it brought him unto an endlesse captivity of love. Secondly, There is this that we would say of precious Christ, which may engage our souls unto him, that for all the wrongs believers do to Christ, yet hath he never an ill word of them to his Father, but commends them, which is clear from that of *John* 17. 6. where Christ doth commend the Disciples to the Father for the Grace of obedience,

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They have kept thy word; and for the grace of faith, verse 8. *They have believed that thou didst send me*; and yet were not the Disciples most defective in obedience, both in this, *That they did not take up their cross and follow Christ*, and also that they did not adhere to him in the day that He was brought to *Cajaphas* hall; and were they not most defective in the grace of faith, as is clear from *Mat.* 17. 17. and likewise from *John* 14. 1. He is pressing them to believe in him, and yet He doth commend them to the Father, as most perfect in those things. Thirdly, There is this that we would lastly say of him who is the noble object of faith, look to the eminent depths of Christ's condescendency, and then you will be provoked to love him: Was it not infinite love that made Christ to ly three dayes in the grave, that we might be through all the ages of eternity with him? Was it not infinite condescendency that made his precious head wear a crown of thorns, that we might eternally wear a crown of glory? Was it not infinite condescendency that made Christ wear a purple rob that so we might wear that precious rob of the righteousness of the Saints? And was it not matchless condescendency, that Christ who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that so we might become like unto him? and be made the righteousness of God in him?

But to come to that which we intend mainly to speak upon at this time, which is that second thing that we proposed to speak of from these words, and that is concerning the excellency of this grace of faith

Faith, vvhich vve cleared; vvas holden out in that, that Faith vvas called his commandement, vvhich is called by vvay of eminency & excellency. There are many things in Scripture, vvhich may ſweetly point out the precious excellency of this grace of Faith, and vve ſhall only ſpeak to theſe things.

I. The firſt thing that ſpeaketh out the excellency of Faith, is this, it exercileth it ſelf upon a moſt noble object (to vvit) Jeſus *Chriſt*; Faith and Love being the two arms of the immortall ſoul, by which we do imbrace a crucified Savior, which is often pointed at in Scripture, and vve ſhall point at theſe three principall acts of Faith, vvhich it exerciſeth on Jeſus Chriſt as the object of it.

1. The firſt is, to make up an Union betwixt Chriſt and the Believer (Faith being indeed an uniting grace, & that vvhich knitteth the members to the head) and to make this more fully appear, vve vvould point out a little vvhat a ſweet harmony & correſpondency there is betwixt theſe two ſiſter-graces (to vvit) Faith and Love. Faith is that nail vvhich taſteneth the ſoul to Chriſt, and Love is that grace which driveth that nail to the head; Faith at firſt taketh but a tender grip of Chriſt, and then Love cometh in, and maketh the ſoul take a more ſure grip of him. Secondly, ye may ſee their harmony in this, Faith is that grace which taketh hold (as it were) *of the Garment of Chriſt, and of his words*; but Love (that ambitious grace) it taketh hold of the heart of *Chriſt*, and, as it were, his heart doth melt in the hand of Love. Thirdly, It

may be seen in this, Faith is that grace which draweth the first draught of the likeness and Image of Christ upon a soul, but that accomplishing grace of love, it doth compleat these first draughts, and these imperfect lineaments of Christs Image, which were first drawn on the soul. Fourthly, by Faith and Love, the heart of Christ and of the Believer are so united, that they are no more two, but one Spirit.

2. There is this second act that Faith exerciseth on Christ, and it is in discovering the matchlesse excellencies, and the transcendent properties of Jesus Christ. O what large and precious commentaries doth Faith make upon Christ! It is indeed that faithfull spy, which doth alwayes bring up good report of him: Hence it is, that Faith is called understanding, *Col.* 2. 2. Because it is that grace which revealeth much of the precious truth of that noble object.

3. And there is this third noble act of Faith, exercising it self upon Christ, *viz.* It maketh Christ precious to the soul, according to that word, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. *Unto you which believe, he is precious* And if there were no other thing to speak forth its worth but that, it is more then sufficient; for no doubt this is the exercise of the higher house to be dwelling on the contemplation of Christ's beauty, and to have their souls transported with love towards him, and with joy in him. Reason & amazement are seldome companions but here they do sweetly joyn together. First, a Christian loveth Christ because of Christs

actings

actings; and then he loveth all these actings because they come from Christ.

2. Now secondly, this pointeth out the precious excellency of the grace of Faith; it is that grace which is most mysterious & sublime in its actings; it hath a more divine and sublime way of acting than any other grace; hence it is called *Thy Mystery of Faith*, which speaketh this, that the actings of Faith are mysteries to the most part of the world; and I shall only point at these things, which may speak out the mysterious actings of the grace of Faith.

1. Faith can believe, and fix it self on a word of promise, although sense, reason, and probability, seem to contradict the accomplishment of that promise: Faith it walketh not by the low dictates of sense and reason, but by a higher rule (to wit) *The sure word of prophecy*, which is clear from *Rom.* 4. 19. *Where* Abraham *belived the promise*, notwithstanding that sense and reason seemed to contradict it; *He considered not the deadness of his own body neither the barrenness of* Sarahs *womb, but was strong in Faith, giving glory to God*; and it is clear from *Heb.* 11. 29 30. where Faith believed *their passing through the Red-sea upon dry ground*, which was most contrary to sense and reason: *Faith belicved the falling down of the walls of* Jericho, *by the blowing of Rams horns*: Which things are most impossible to sense & reason: for sense will oftentimes cry out, *All men are lyars*; and reason will say, *How can such a thing be?* and yet that heroick grace of Faith,

cryeth out, *Hath he ſpoken it? He will alſo do it: Hath he ſaid it? then it ſhall come to paſs.*

2. Faith can believe a word of promiſe, notwithſtanding that the diſpenſations of God ſeem to contradict it; as was clear in *Job*, who profeſſed he *would truſt in God though he ſhould kill him.* And no doubt but this was the practice of believing *Jacob*, he truſted that that promiſe ſhould be accompliſhed *that the elder ſhould ſerve the younger*; though all the diſpenſations of God which he did meet with, ſeemed to ſay that promiſe ſhould not be accompliſhed.

3. Faith can believe a word of promiſe, even when the commands of God ſeem to contradict the accompliſhment of that promiſe; this is clear in that ſingular inſtance of *Abraham*'s Faith, that notwithſtanding he was commanded to kill his promiſed ſeed (upon whom did depend the accompliſhment of the promiſes) yet he believed that the promiſes ſhould be performed. And though there were indeed extraordinary and ſtrange tryals of his Faith, as he had natural affection to wreſtle with, yet over the belly of all theſe, believing *Abraham* he giveth Faith to the promiſe, and bringeth his ſon *Iſaac* to the Altar (though he did receive him back again) this is clear from *Heb.* 11. 17, 18. 19.

4. Faith can exerciſe it ſelf upon the promiſe, notwithſtanding that challenges and convictions of unworthineſſe and guilt do wait on the chriſtian; this is clear, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. that although *his houſe was not ſo with God as did become*, yet he believed the promiſe;

promiſe; as likewiſe it is clear from *Pſa.*65.3. *Iniquities prevail againſt me*; and yet that doth not interrupt his faith, but he ſaith, *As for our tranſgreſſions, thou ſhalt purge them away.* And certainly it were a noble and precious act of Faith to believe, notwithſtading of unanſwerable challenges of guilt; the beſt way, both to crucifie our Idols, & to anſwer thoſe challenges, is believing, *and hoping againſt hope*, and cloſing with Chriſt, this is clear from *Iſa.* 64.6, 7. compared with ver. 8. where after ſtrange challenges, the Prophet hath a ſtrange word, *but now O Lord, thou art our Father.* There is an Emphaſis in the word [now] for all this, yet *thou art* [now] *our Father.*

5. And laſtly, this pointeth out the myſterious acting of the grace of Faith, that it exerciſeth it ſelf upon an inviſible object, even upon Chriſt not yet ſeen, according to that word, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. *Whom having not ſeen, yet ye love, in whom though now ye ſee him not, yet believing*, &c. I poſe the greater part of you who are here, whether or not theſe be two of the greateſt paradoxes and myſteries unto you? For is not this a myſtery to love him whom we never ſaw? *Whom having not ſeen, yet ye love*: To love an abſent and unſeen Chriſt, is a myſtery to the moſt part of the world; and is not this a myſtery to believe on him whom we never ſaw? *In whom, though ye ſee him not, yet believing.* And I ſhall adde this, that Faith can hold faſt its intereſt with God, notwithſtanding the moſt precious chriſtians ſhould call us hypocrites, & not acknowledge

us: this is clear in the practice of *Job*, and most clear from that word, *Isa.* 63. 16. *Doubtless thou art our Father, though* Abraham *be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not.*

III. Thirdly, this pointeth out the excellency of the grace of Faith, that Faith (when it is in exercise) is that grace by which a Christian doth attain unto most sensible enjoyments. There is a great question that is much debated amongst Christians, what is the way to win to this happy length, to be alwayes under the sweet and refreshing influence of heaven, and to have his dew alwayes coming down upon our branches? I can give no answer to it but this, Be much in the exercise of Faith; this is clear from that notion and name put upon Faith, *Isaiah* 45. 22. It is called a look to Christ, which is a most sensible act. If ye would know a description of Faith, it is this, *The divine contemplation of the immortal soul upon that divine, excellent and precious object Jesus Christ*: For God never made Faith a liar, and therefore its eye is never off him that is the noble object of Faith, Jesus Christ manifested in the Gospel; and it is clear, *Eph.* 1. 13. *After ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise*, which preacheth out the excellent enjoyments these had after their closing with Christ who is invisible. Our Faith is called a seeing, which speaketh out this, that Faiths sight of God is as certain as if we did behold him with our eyes; as is clear *Heb.* 11. 27. *Moses saw him by Faith who is invisible.* And we conceive that the ground which maketh the most

most part of us have such complaints, *How long wilt thou forget us for ever?* It is this, the want of the spiritual exercise of Faith, and are there not some here who may cry out, *It is more then thirty dayes since I did behold the King*: Yea, there are some who go a greater length, and cry out, *I have lived these two years at Jerusalem, and yet I have not seen the King's face*: Yea, there are some here whose complaint may go a little higher, and cry forth, *These three years and six moneths it hath not rained on me*; but the clouds have been restrained, and bound up, and the heavens have become brasse. And would ye know the rise of these complaints? It is this, ye are nor much in the spiritual exercise of Faith. And to you I would only say these two words. First, it is easier to perswade a reprobate that he is defective in the fear of God, and in his love to God, than to perswade some such, that they are wanting to God in their Faith, for they hold fast that piece of desperate iniquity till they die. Secondly, We would say to those of you who have the valley of *Achor* for a door of hope, and have tasted of the sweetness of Christ, some of you will be less convinced for the neglect of the duty of Faith, then for the neglect of the duty of Prayer; or of the duty of keeping the Sabbath day. But I am perswaded of this, that if the noble worth of that transcendent object were known, we would have a holy impatience untill once we did believe.

IV. Fourthly, this also pointeth out the excellency of the grace of Faith; it is that grace by which

a chriſtian is advanced to the higheſt and moſt inconceivable pitch of dignity, and that is to be the child of the living God; as is clear, *John* 1. 12. *To as many as received, or believed in him, he gave power or prerogative to become the ſons of God.* And certainly that noble prerogative of Adoption is much undervalued by many: And I will tell you two grounds whereon the moſt part of men undervalue that excellent gift of Adoption: Firſt, they do not take up the infinite highneſs of God, and what a one he is, otherwiſe they would cry out with *David*, *Seemeth it a ſmall thing in your eyes to be a ſon to the King of Kings?* Secondly, we do not take up nor underſtand thoſe matchleſs priviledges which are given to them who are once in this eſtate: I am perſwaded if this were believed, that *he who is a ſervant doth not abide in the houſe for ever*, though he that is a Son doth; it would ſtir us up to more Divine zeal in our purſuit after Chriſt.

V. Fifthly, this likewiſe pointeth out the excellency of the grace of Faith; it is that grace by which all other actions are pleaſant to God, and are taken off our hand, as is clear, *Heb.* 11. 4. *By faith* Abel *offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than* Cain, which muſt be underſtood even to all other duties. And that word verſe 6. *Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, ſpeaketh this alſo, that by faith we do exceedingly pleaſe him. And this is a moſt ſad and lamentable reproof unto many who are here, that their actions do not pleaſe God, becauſe they are not in Faith. Would you know a deſcription of your prayers?

prayers? (ye who are hypocrites, and deſtitute of the knowledge of God) It is this, your prayers are the breach of the third command, *in taking the name of the Lord in vain, for which he will not hold you guiltleſs.* And would you know what is your hearing of Sermons? *It is an abomination to the Lord*; according to that word in *Tit.* 1. 15. *To the unbelieving & impure is nothing clean.* And as *Solomon* doth ſpeak, *the plowing of the wicked is ſin*; ſo that all your actions that ye go about are but an offence to the Majeſty of the Lord.

Now we would ſpeak to theſe two things before we proceed to the evidence of Faith (to wit) Firſt, that there is a difference betwixt the direct act of Faith, and the reflecting act of Faith. For there may be a direct act of faith in a Chriſtian, when he is not perſwaded that he doth believe; but the reflecting acts of Faith are theſe which a Chriſtian hath when he is perſwaded in his conſcience that he doth believe. And we would ſecondly ſay, that there are many that do go down to their grave under that ſoul-deſtroying deluſion, that they are in the Faith, and yet never did know what Faith is. I am perſwaded there are many whom all the preachings in the world will never perſwade that they did never believe; their faith being born with them, and it vvill die vvith them vvithout any fruit; but faith being ſuch an excellent grace, and ſo advantagious, (vvhereof we have ſpoken a few things) we ſhall ſpeak a little further of it: Firſt, in pointing out ſome evidences by vvhich a Chriſtian may knovv

whether or not he be in the Faith. Secondly, I ſhall give you ſome helps whereby Faith may be keeped in exerciſe.

I. Now there is this firſt evidence of Faith, that a Chriſtian who doth believe, he accounteth abſence and want of fellowſhip with Chriſt, and communion with him, one of the greateſt and moſt lamentable croſſes that ever he had; as is clear, *Pſal.* 13. 3. *Lighten mine eyes*, ſaid *David*, that is, *let me behold, and be ſatisfied with thy face*, and the motive that he backeth it with, is this, *Leſt I ſleep the ſleep of death. David* thought himſelf a dead man if Chriſt did withdraw his preſence from him, alſo it is clear; *Cant.* 3. 1. compared with the following verſes, where abſence from Chriſt, and want of communion with him, was the greateſt croſs the Spouſe had; and it is clear from *John* 20. 11, 12, 13. where *Mary* had a holy diſdain of all things, in reſpect and compariſon of Chriſt. But I will tell you what an hypocrite doth moſt lament, and that is the want of reputation amongſt the Saints; that is the great god and Idol amongſt hypocrites, and that which (when not enjoyed) hypocrites, and atheiſts lament moſt; the world, and the luſt of their eyes; when they want theſe, then they cry out, *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* They think heaven can never make up the loſs of earth. And certainly if many of us would examine our ſelves by this, we ſhould find our ſelves moſt defective: I would poſe all you who are here, who have taken on a name to be followers of Chriſt, whether or not

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ye have been content to walk thirty days in abſence from Chriſt, and yet never to lament it: Hath not Chriſt been thirty dayes and more in heaven without a viſite from you? And yet for all this, you have not cloathed your ſelves with ſackcloath: I will not ſay that this is an undeniable evidence of the totall want of the grace of Faith; but it doth eminently prove this, that the perſon who hath come this length, hath loſt much of his primitive love, and much of that high eſteem, which he ought to have of matchleſs Chriſt: What can you find in this world, that maketh you converſe ſo little with heaven? I think that it is the noble encouragement of a Chriſtian, when he is going down to his grave, that he hath this wherewith to comfort himſelf, I *am to change my place, but not my company.* Death to the believing Chriſtian being a bleſſed tranſition and tranſportation to a more immediate, conſtant, and uninterrupted enjoyment of God; But I believe, that if all who have the name of Believers in this generation ſhould go to heaven, they might have this to ſay, I am now not only to change my place, but alſo my company: For theſe ſeventy years have I been converſant with my idols, but now I am to converſe with more bleſſed, divine and excellent company. O that ye might be perſwaded to purſue much after an abſent Chriſt! Were it not a ſweet period of our life, to breath out our laſt breath in his armes, and to be living in the faith of being eternally with him, which might be founded upon his Word.

II. There

II. There is this ſecond evidence of one that is in the Faith: They do endeavour to advance that neceſſary vvork of the mortification of their Idols, according to that vvord, 1 *John* 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure.* Acts 15. 9. *Faith it purifieth the heart.* And concerning this evidence (leſt any ſhould miſtake it) I vvould ſay theſe things to you. Firſt, The mortification of a Chriſtian, as long as he is here belovv, it doth more conſiſt in reſolutions than in attainments. It is certain, that there are high attainments of a Chriſtian, in the mortification of his Idols; but his reſolutions go far above his performances. Secondly, We vvould ſay this, That thoſe chriſtians who never came this length in chriſtianity, to make that an univerſall concluſion, and full reſolution, *What have I to do any more with Idols?* They may ſuſpect themſelves, that they are not in the Faith: For a Chriſtian that is in Chriſt, he is univerſall in reſolutions, though he be not ſo in practice, but defective in performances. A Chriſtian may have big reſolutions with weak performances; for reſolutions will be at the gate of heaven, before practice come from the border of hell; there being a long diſtance betwixt reſolution and practice; and the one much ſwifter then the other. And thirdly, We would likewiſe ſay, that ye who never did know what it was to endeavour (by prayer and the exerciſe of other duties) the mortification of your luſts and idols, ye may be afraid, that ye have not yet the hope of ſeeing him

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as he is. And I would ſay this to many, who are ſettled upon their lees, and who never did know what it was to ſpend one hour in ſecret prayer for mortifying an Idol, that they would beware, leſt that curſe be paſt in heaven againſt them, *I would have purged you, and ye would not be purged, therefore ye ſhall not be purged any more till ye die*: That iniquity of refuſing to commune with Chriſt in the work of ſecret mortification, I ſay, that *iniquity ſhall not be purged away*. And we would once ſeriouſly deſire you, by that dreadfull ſentence that Chriſt ſhall paſs againſt you, and by the love you have to your immortall ſouls, and by the pains of thoſe everlaſting torments in hell, that ye would ſeriouſly ſet about the work of ſpiritual mortification, that ſo ye may evidence that ye have believed, and that ye have the ſoul-comforting hope of eternall life. I would only ſpeak this one word to you, and deſire you ſeriouſly to ponder it: What if within twelve houres hereafter a ſummons were given to you (without continuation of dayes) to compear before the ſolemn and dreadfull Tribunal of that impartial Judge, Jeſus Chriſt? What ſuppoſe ye, would be your thoughts? Will you examine your own conſcience, what you think would be your thoughts, if ſuch ſummons were given unto you: I am perſwaded of this, *That your knees would ſmite one againſt another, and your faces would gather paleneſs*, ſeeing your conſcience would condemn you, *That you had been weighed in the ballance and found light*: O think ye that ye can both fight

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and triumph in one day? Think ye that ye can fight and overcome in one day? Think ye your luſts and unmortified corruptions ſo weak, and faint-hearted an enemy, that upon the firſt appearance of ſuch imaginary champions (as moſt part of us are in our own eyes) that your Idols would lay down armes, and let you trample on them? Believe me, mortification is not a work of one day, or one year, but it is a work will ſerve you all your time, begin as ſon as you will; and therefore ſeeing you have ſpent your dayes in the works of the fleſh, it is time that now you would begin and purſue after him, whoſe work is with him, and whoſe reward ſhal come before him.

III. Now there is this third evidence, by which a Chriſtian may know whether he be in the faith or not; and it is, that Chriſt is matchleſs and incomparable unto ſuch an one, according to that word, 1. *Pet.* 2. 7. *To you that believe, Chriſt is precious*: and that word that *Luke* hath in his 7. chapter, at the cloſe: *That ſhe to whom much was forgiven, loved much.* Now leſt this likewiſe ſhould prove a diſcouragement to any, I would only have you take notice of this, that a Chriſtian may be a believer, and yet want the ſenſible diſcoveries of this, that Chriſt is matchleſly precious to him: but this is certain, that when they are in the lively exerciſe of faith, it is impoſſible then for them not to eſteem Chriſt matchleſs: and I would ſpeak this likewiſe to many who are here; Have you not been living theſe ten years in faith? and I would poſe you with this

this: Esteem you not your Idols more matchless then Christ, and more of worth then he? It is impossible that there can be any lively exercise of faith, and not esteem Christ matchless: It is not to say it with your mouth, and contradict it with your heart, will do the business: For if your heart could speak, it would say, I would sell Christ *for thirty pieces of silver*; but mine idols would I sell at no rate. Are there not many of you who love the world and its pleasures better then eternity of joy? Oh! know you not that word, O ye desperately ignorant of the truths of God! *That he who loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him?* And yet notwithstanding of the light of the Word, yet would sell your immortal souls, with *Esau, for a mess of pottage.* O but it is a poor bargain when you have sold the eternity of joy for a passing world, and for its transitory delights! I would earnestly know what shal be your thoughts in that day, when you shal be standing upon the utmost line betwixt time and eternity. O! what will be your thoughts at that day? But you are to follow on to endless pain, by appearance, and then you are to leave your idols. I shal only desire that you may read the word, *Isai.* 10. 3. *What will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shal come from far? To whom will ye flee for help? And where will ye leave your glory?* You shal then preach mortification to the life, though all the time of mortification shal be then cut off. O but to hear a worldly minded man, when eternity of pain is looking him in the face,

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preach out concerning the vanity of this world, might it not perſwade you that the world is a fancy and a dream that ſhal flee away, and ſhal leave you in the day of your greateſt ſtrait?

IV. And there is this fourth evidence of faith, that a Chriſtian who doth truly believe, he is that Chriſtian who entertaineth a divine jealouſie, and a holy ſuſpition of himſelf, whether or not he doth believe. I love not that faith which is void of fear; this was clear in the practice of believing *Noah*, that though by faith he built the Ark, yet he had fear mixed with his faith. I know that there are ſome who are ignorant concerning this, what it is to doubt concerning eternal peace; and more, it is not every one that doubteth, that certainly ſhal get Heaven; for I think an hypocrite may doubt concerning his eternal ſalvation; however, I think the exerciſe of an hypocrite under his doubtings, it is more the exerciſe of his judgement, then the exerciſe of his conſcience. And I may ſay, that if all the exerciſe of the Law, which is preached in theſe days were narrowly ſearched, it would be more the exerciſe of light, then the exerciſe of conſcience. We ſpeak theſe things as our doubt, which was never our exerciſe; and we make theſe things our publick exerciſe which was never our private, and chamber-exerciſe. And I think that if all that a Chriſtian did ſpeak to God in prayer, were his exerciſe, he would ſpeak leſs, and wonder more. We would be ſpeechleſs when we go to God; for often if we did ſpeak nothing but our exerciſe, we would have

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nothing to ſay. And certainly it is true, that often we fall into that woful ſin of *deſperate lying againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, by flattering God with our mouth, and lying unto him with our tongue. And I ſhal only ſay theſe two words, there are ſome who have this for their great deſign, *viz.* they would be at peace with their conſcience, and alſo they would be at peace with their Idols: they would gladly reconcile conſcience and their Idols together. That is their great deſign. And there are ſome whoſe deſign is a little more refined; they ſtudy rather to be reconciled with their conſcience, then to be reconciled with God: Their great aime they ſhoot at, is this, to get their conſcience quieted, though they know not what it is to have the ſoul-comforting peace of God to quiet them.

V. Now, there is this laſt evidence of faith, that juſtifying faith is a faith which putteth the Chriſtian to be much in the exerciſe of thoſe duties by vvhich it may be maintained; for vve muſt keep faith as the *apple of our eye*: and for that end, I vvould only give you theſe three things, by which faith muſt be kept in exerciſe; and a real Chriſtian vvill be endeavoring in ſome meaſure to attain unto theſe.

1. It keepeth faith much in exerciſe, to be much in marking & taking notice of the divine exerciſe, and proofs of the love of God, vvherewith a Chriſtian doth meet, as is clear frõ that word in *Rom.* 5. 4. *Experience worketh hope.* I duſt be bold to charge the moſt part that are indeed in Chriſt vvith this, that

that they are too little in remarking, and taking notice of the experiences of his love. You should mark the place of your experience, and much more you should mark the experience it self, as is clear from Scripture, that the very place where Christians did meet with experience in such an enjoyment of God, they marked it, *Ezech.* 1. 1. *By the rivers of Chebar the heavens were opened, and I saw the visions of God.* And *Gen.* 32. 30. *Jacob called the place Peniel.* The place of being after seeing of the face of God, it was so remarkable unto him. And we conceive, that you would mark these two things mainly in your practice. First, you would mark, if you can possibly, the first day of your closing with Christ, and your coming out of *Egypt*: and we may allude unto that command (if not more then allude to it) in *Deut.* 16. 1. *Observe the moneth of Abib, and keep the Passeover unto the Lord thy God: for in the moneth of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee out of the land of Egypt.* And secondly, we would have you much in marking these experiences which have encreased your faith, and which have strengthened your love, and which have made you mortifie your Idols. These are experiences especially to be marked.

2. Faith is kept in exercise, and we win to the lively assurance of our interest in God which we would press upon you, by being much in the exercise of secret prayer. O! but many love much to pray when abroad, who never loved to pray when alone. And that is a desperate sign of hypocrisie, accord

according to that *Matth.* 6. 5. it is said of hypocrites; *They love to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in the corners of the street that they might be seen of men.* But it is never said of these persons, that they love to pray alone, only they loved to pray in Synagogues; but it is secret and retired prayers by which faith must be kept in exercise.

3. And there is this likewise that we would press upon you, that you would be much in studying communion and fellowship with God, that so your faith may be kept in life. And, O what a blessed life were it, each day to be taken up to the top of the Mount *Pisga*, and there to behold that promised land, to get a refreshful sight of the crown every morning, which might make us walk with joy all along the day! The heart of a Christian ought to be in heaven, his conversation ought to be there, his eyes ought to be there; and I know not what of a Christian ought to be out of heaven; (even before his going there) save his lumpish tabernacle of clay, which cannot inherit incorruption till he be made incorruptible. And I shal say no more but this, many of us are readier to betray him with a kiss, and crucifie him afresh, then to keep communion with him: but *wo eternally be to him by whom the Son of Man is betrayed, and that doth crucifie Christ afresh: It were better that a milstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the depth of the sea.* I remember an expression of a man, not two dayes ago, who upon his death-bed, being asked by one, what he was doing? did most stupidly, though

though most truly, reply, *That he was fighting with Christ*: and I think that the most part of us (if he prevent us not) shal die *fighting with Christ*. But know and be perswaded, that he is too sore a party for us *to fight with*: *He will once tread you in the wine-press of his fury, and he shal return with dyed garments from treading such of you as would not imbrace him: He shal destroy you with all his heart. Therefore be instructed* (lest his soul be disjointed from you) as that word in *Jer.* 6. 8. *And lest your soul eternally be separated from him.* Be instructed, I say, to close with him by faith. Now to him who can make you to do so, we desire to give praise.

In the two Sermons next following, you have the rest of those sweet purposes which the worthy Author preached upon the same Text.

SERMON V.

JOHN 3. 23. *This is his Commandement, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ*, &c.

THere are two great rocks upon which a Christian doth ordinarily dash in his way and motion toward his rest. 1. The rock of presumption and carnal confidence; so that when Christ dandleth them upon his knees, and satisfieth them with the breasts of his consolations, and maketh their cup to over-flow, then they cry out, *My mountain standeth strong, I shal never be moved.*

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And 2. the rock of misbelief and discouragement; so that when he hideth his face, and turneth back the face of his Throne, then they cry out; *Our hope and strength is perished from the Lord.* We know not what it is to bear our enjoyments by humility, nor our crosses by patience and submission. O! but misbelief and jealousie are bad interpreters of dark dispensations: they know not what it is to read these mysterious characters of divine providence, except they be written in the legible characters of sense: misbelief is big with child of twins, and is travelling till it bring forth apostasie and security: and no doubt, he is a blessed Christian that hath overcome that woful Idol of misbelief, and doth walk by that Royal Law of the Word, and not by that changeable rule of dispensations. We conceive that there are three great Idols and Dagons of a Christian, that hindereth him from putting a blank in Christ's hand, concerning his guiding to Heaven; there is pride, self-indulgence, and security. Do we not covet to be more excellent then our neighbors? Do we not love to travel to Heaven through a valley of roses? And do we not ambitiously desire to walk toward *Sion*, sleeping rather then weeping, *as we go?* Are there not some words that we would have taken out of the Bible? That is sad Divinity to flesh and blood: *Through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of Heaven:* we love not to be *changed from vessel to vessel, that so our scent may be taken from us.*

There are three great enemies of Christ; misbelief

belief, hypocriſie, and profanity. Misbelief is a bloody ſin, hypocriſie is a ſilent ſin, profanity is a crying ſin; thoſe are mother evils. And I ſhal give you theſe differences betwixt them: Misbelief crucifieth Chriſt under the vail of humility, hypocriſie crucifieth Chriſt under the vail of love, and profanity putteth him to open ſhame. Misbelief denieth the love and power of God, hypocriſie denieth the omniſcience of God, and profanity denieth the juſtice of God: misbelief is a ſin that looketh after inherent righteouſneſs, hypocriſie is a ſin that looketh after external holineſs only, and profanity is a ſin that looketh after heaven without holineſs, making a connexion between thoſe things that God hath alwayes ſeparate, and ſeparating thoſe things which he hath alwayes put together; ſo that their faith ſhal once prove a deluſion, and flee away as a dream in the night: but let us ſtudy this excellent grace of true and laving faith, which ſhal be a precious remedy againſt all thoſe Chriſt-deſtroying and ſoul-deſtroying evils.

But now to come to that which we did propoſe thirdly, to be ſpoken of from the words, which was the ſweetneſs of this grace of Faith; no doubt it is a pleaſant command, and it maketh all commands pleaſant: it is that which caſteth a divine luſtre upon the moſt hard ſayings of Chriſt, and maketh the Chriſtian to cry forth, *God hath ſpoken in his holineſs, I will rejoice.* We need not ſtand long to clear that faith is a ſweet and refreſhing command;

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for it is oftentimes recorded in Scripture to the advantage of this grace, that unspeakable joy and heavenly delight, are the hand-maids that wait upon it. But more particularly to make it out, we shal speak to these things. The first is, that this grace giveth a Christian a broad and comprehensive sight of Christ, and maketh to behold not only the beauty of his actings, but the beauty of his person: And there are these three precious sights that faith giveth to a Christian of Christ. First, it letteth the Christian see Christ in his absolute & personal excellency, taking him up as the eternal Son of God, as the Ancient of dayes, as the Father of eternity, as *the expres image of his Fathers person, and the brightnes of his glory*; and this filleth the soul with divine fear and admiration. Hence is that word, *Heb.* 11. 28. *That we see by faith, him that is invisible.* As if he had said, Faith is that grace that maketh things that are invisible, visible unto us. It letteth the soul see Christ in his relative excellencies; that is, what he is to us. Faith taketh up Christ as a husband, and from thence we are provoked to much boldnes and divine confidence, and withall, to see those rich possessions that are provided for us by our elder brother, who was *born for adversity*. Faith taketh up Christ as a blessed *Dayes-man that did lay his hands on us both.* And from thence it is constrained to wonder at the condescendency of Christ. It taketh him up as dying, and as redeeming us from the power of the grave, and from the hands of our enemies; and this

provoketh Chriſtians to make a total and abſolute reſignation of themſelves over unto Chriſt, *To ſerve him all the dayes of their life in righteouſneſs and holineſs.* And thirdly, Faith maketh the ſoul behold thoſe myſterious draughts of ſpotleſs love, thoſe divine emanations of love that hath flowed from his ancient and everlaſting love, ſince the world began. Would you know the great ground why we are ſo ignorant of him, who is the ſtudy of Angels, and of all that are about the Throne? It is this, we are not much in the exerciſe of faith. And if we would ask that queſtion, What is the way to attain to the ſaving knowledge of God in Chriſt? We could give no anſwer to it but this: Believe, and again, believe, and again believe. Faith openeth thoſe myſterious ſeals of his boundleſs perfections, and in ſome way teacheth the Chriſtian to anſwer to that unanſwerable queſtion, *What is his Name? And what is his Sons Name?*

There is this ſecondly, that pointeth out the ſweetneſs of faith, that it giveth an excellent reliſh unto the promiſes, and maketh them food to our ſouls. What are all the promiſes without faith (as to our uſe) but as a dead letter hath no life? But faith exerciſed upon the promiſes, maketh a Chriſtian cry out, *The words of his mouth are ſweeter unto me then the honey and the honey comb*; as it is clear from *Heb.* 11. 12. 13. It is by faith that we embrace the promiſes, and do receive them.

Thirdly, the ſweetneſs of faith may appear by this, that it enableth a Chriſtian to rejoyce under the

the moſt anxious and afflicting diſpenſations that he meeteth with whilſt he is here below; as is clear from *Rom.* 5. 1.3. where his being juſtified by faith hath this fruit attending it, to *joy in tribulation*: And likewiſe from *Heb.* 10. 34. 35. doth not faith hold the crown in its right hand, and letteth a Chriſtian behold theſe infinite dignities that are provided unto them, after they have *as a ſtrong man run their race?* And when a Chriſtian is put into a *furnace hotter ſeven times more then ordinary*, it bringeth down the Son of man Jeſus Chriſt, to *walk with them in the furnace*, ſo that they walk ſafely, and with joy through fire and water, and (in a manner) they can have no croſs in his company. For would ye know what is the deſcription of a croſs? It is to want Chriſt in any eſtate. And would you know what is the deſcription of proſperity? It is to have Chriſt in any condition or eſtate of life. What can ye want that have him? And what can you have that want him? He is that all, ſo that all things beſide him are but vanity. But beſides this, faith doth diſcover unto a Chriſtian, that there is a ſweet period of all his trials and afflictions that he can be expoſed unto; ſo that he can never ſay that of faith which *Ahab* ſpoke of *Micajah*, *He never propheſieth good things to me*; but rather he may ſay always the contrary, faith never propheſieth evil unto me, it being a grace that propheſieth excellent things in the darkeſt night, & ſweetly declareth, that though *weeping do endure for the evening, yet joy cometh in the morning.* And that though now they go forth

weeping, bearing precious seed, yet at last they shal return rejoicing, having sheaves in their bosome.

¶ And this may bring in the fourth consideration, to point out the sweetness of faith, that it giveth a refreshing sight of that land which is afar off, and maketh him to behold that inheritance that is provided *for the Saints in light:* it goeth forth to the *brook Eshcol*, and there doth pluck down these grapes that grow in *Emmanuel's* land, to bring up a good report upon that noble Countrey we are sojourning towards, and the city, the streets whereof are paved with transparent gold. And howbeit it may be a perplexing debate between many & their own souls, whether or not these eyes that have been the windows through which so much uncleanness hath entered, and those species of lust have been conveyed into the heart, shal once be the *eyes of a dove washed with milk, and fitly set*, and be admitted to see that glorious object, *the Lamb that sitteth upon the Throne?* Or whether ever these tõgues that have been *set on fire of hell*, and these polluted lips that have spoke so much against God and heaven, and all his people, and interests, shal ever be admitted to sing these heavenly *Halelujahs* amongst those spotless quire of Angels, and that *assemblie of the first-born?* Or if these hands or feet that have been so active to commit iniquity, and so swift *to run after vanity*, shal ever be admitted hereafter to carry those *Palm branches*, and follow the *Lamb where ever he goeth?* Or whether ever these hearts that have been indeed *a Bethaven, a house for Idols*, may

may yet notwithstanding be a dwelling for the holy Ghost? Though these things, we say, and such like, may be the subject of many sad debates to some weary souls, and cause many *tossings to and fro till the morning*; yet faith can bring all these mysteries to light, and looking *within the vail*, can let us see thousands of thousands, who were once as ugly as our selves, yet now having *washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*, are admitted to *stand before the Throne of God, and serve him day and night.*

Now there is that, fourthly, which we promised to speak of, concerning this grace of Faith, from these words, and it is the absolute necessity that is of the exercise of this grace, which is holden forth in that word, *His Commandement*, which doth import these three things. 1. That all the commands that we can obey without this commandement of Faith, it is but a polluting of our selves, and a plunging of our selves in the ditch till our own cloathes abhor us. 2. That God taketh greater delight in the exercise of that grace of Faith, then in the exercise of any other. And lastly, that as to the many imperfections which we have in our obedience, there is a sweet act of oblivion past of them all, if we make conscience seriously to obey this command of Faith, which is indeed the sweet compend of the Gospel: all these things doth most clearly appear, in that believing here is called, *His Commandement*, by way of excellency, as if this were his only commandement.

But that we may yet a little more particularly point out the abſolute neceſſity of faith, there are theſe things that ſpeaketh it forth to the ful. 1. That though rivers of tears ſhould run down our eyes, becauſe we keep not his Law; though we ſhould never riſe off our knees from prayer, and ſhould all our lifetime ſpeak to God with the tongue of Angels; and though we ſhould conſtantly obey his commands, yet without faith we ſhould never eſcape that eternal ſentence of excommunication from the preſence of the Lord; there being no action that doth proceed from us which can pleaſe the Majeſty of the Lord, unleſs it hath its riſe from this principle of faith; as is clear from *Heb.* 11.6. *Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.* And though we ſhould offer unto him ten thouſand rivers of oyl, & thouſands of rams, and ſhould offer up in a burnt ſacrifice all the beaſts that *are upon the mountains, and the trees that are upon many hills*, this ſhould be the anſwer that God ſhould return to us: *Who hath required theſe things at your hands? I take no pleaſure in theſe ſolemn ſacrifices*; becauſe there is no way of attaining peace with God, but through the exerciſe of faith, making uſe of the ſpotleſs righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt. 2. Let us do our outmoſt by all the inventions we can, to bring down our body, and let us ſeparat our ſelves from all the pleaſures of the fleſh; yet all our Idols ſhal reign without much contradiction, except we do once attain unto this grace of faith, which is that victory *whereby we muſt overcome the world*, and the hand that maketh uſe of

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infinite ſtrength for ſubduing of corruptiõs, making the Chriſtian ſweetly to take up that ſong, *ſtronger is he that is with us, then he that is in the world.*

From all this that we have ſaid, both of the ſweetneſs of faith, and the neceſſitȳ thereof, we would propoſe theſe few conſiderations, to two or three ſorts of perſons.

1. There are ſome who live in that vain imaginary deluſion of attaining to heaven through a covenant of works, and do neglect to ſeek ſalvation by faith in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and to thoſe who build upon this ſandy foundation, I ſhal ſay but theſe two words. Firſt, how long ſhal ye labor *in the fire for very vanity?* Do ye ever think to put on the cap-ſtone? Know you not that the day is approaching, when your houſe ſhal fall about your ears, your confidence ſhal be rejected, and your *hope ſhal evaniſh as a dream, and flee away as a viſion in the night?* Secondly, what a monſtrous blindneſs, and what an unſpeakable act of follie muſt it be, to ſay that Chriſt was crucified in vain? which yet ye do practically aſſert, when ye go about to purchaſe a righteouſneſs through the works of the Law.

2. There are ſome who are ſecure in their own thoughts concerning their faith; they never queſtioned the reality of it, they never examined it. O ye whoſe faith is as old as your ſelves, ye ſay ye never knew what it was to diſpute; and I may ſay, ye never knew what it was to believe. Thou profane hypocrite, let me tell thee, a ſtrong faith, and

yet strong Idols, must needs be a strong delusion: Thou wilt not obey the Lord: Thou wilt not pray: Thou wilt not believe a threatning in all the Word: Thou wilt count all Religion madness and foolishness, and yet thou wilt perswade thy self thou believest in Christ. *Oh! be not deceived: God is not mocked*; and why will ye mock your selves? Shal I tell you that reprobates have a sad Religion? One day they must believe, and obey, and pray, and give a testimony to godliness; but, alace! too late, and little to their advantage. Shal not he whom all the Ministers on earth could scarce ever perswade to believe so much as a Heaven or Hell, or one threatning in all the Book of God, at last be forced to believe their own sense, when they shal see the Ancient of dayes upon the Throne, and shal hear the cryes of so many thousand living witnesses come out both from Heaven and Hell, bearing testimony to the truth, of threatnings and promises, that not one jot of them is fallen to the ground, and he would never be perswaded to bow a knee to God in earnest all his life? Shal he not then pray with greatest fervency, *That hills and mountains might fall upon him to cover him from the face of the Lamb*? And he that would never submit to a command of God, must he not at last obey that dreadful command, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting torments?* &c. Yea, he who was the greatest mocker in the world, shal then confess, that they are blest who put their trust in the Lord, as they are excellently brought in, though in an

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Apocryphal book, *Wisd. chap.* 5. 4. crying out with great terror while they behold that unexpected sight of the glorious condition of the godly: O here is the men, say they, whom we mocked, whose life we accounted madness, and their end dishonorable. Be wise therefore in time, and do that willingly, which ye must do by constraint; and do that with sweetness and advantage, that ye must do at last with loss and sorrow.

Thirdly, there are some who certainly have some hope of eternal life, but content themselves with a smal measure of assurance; and these I would beseech, that ye would be more endeavoring to make your calling and election sure, and would be endeavoring to see your names written in the ancient records of Heaven. And this we shal press upon you by several arguments. 1. Those strong and subtil, and soul-destroying delusions that are amongst many, who conceive they do believe (as we were saying) and are *pure in their own eyes, who yet are not purged from their iniquities.* O! are there not many of us that are in a golden dream, that suppose *we are eating; but when we awake, our soul is empty;* whose faith is a Metaphysick notion, that hath no foundation, but man's apprehensions. And this shal never bear us through the gates of death, nor convey us in unto eternity of joy. 2. May not this press you to follow after assurance, that it is the compendious way to sweeten all your crosses, as is clear from *Hab.* 3. 17. 18. where the conviction of this made *Habakkuk* to rejoice *in the God of his*

ſalvation, though the fig tree did not bear fruit, and the labor of the olive did fail, and there were no ſweetneſs to be found in the vine: and from *Heb.* 10. 34. where they take joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods, *knowing within themſelves that they had a better and an enduring ſubſtance.* This is indeed that tree which if we caſt into the waters of *Marah*, they will preſently become ſweet; for is it not below the child of hope to be much anxious about theſe things that he meets with here, when he ſincerely knoweth that commandement ſhal come forth: *Liſt up your heads, for the day of your eternal redemption draweth near*; even the day when all the rivers of his ſorrows ſhal ſweetly run into the Ocean of everlaſting delight? 3. A Chriſtian that is much in aſſurance, he is much in communion and fellowſhip with God, as is clear from the *Song* 1. 13. 14. and *Song* 2. 3. where when once ſhe cometh to that, to be perſwaded that Chriſt was her beloved, then ſhe ſate down under his ſhaddow, and his fruit was pleaſant unto her taſte; for the aſſured Chriſtian doth taſte of theſe crums that fall from that higher Table; and no doubt thoſe that have taſted of that old wine, will not ſtraightway deſire the new, becauſe the old is better. And then, fourthly, it is the way to keep you from apoſtaſie, and making deſection from God: faith is that grace that will make you continue with Chriſt in all his temptations, as is clear from 2. *Pet.* 1. 10. where this is ſet down as a fruit of making our calling and election ſure, that if we do theſe things, we ſhal never fail. Faith maketh

maketh a Christian to live a dependent life: For would you know the *Motto* of a Christian? It is this, *self-diffidence*, and *Christ-dependence*; as is clear from that word in the *Song* 8. 5. that while we are walking through this wilderness; *we are leaning upon our welbeloved.* 5. This assurance will help a Christian to overcome many temptations. There are four sorts of temptations that assault the Christian: There are temptations of desire, temptations of love, temptations of hope, and temptations of anxiety, all which a Christian through this noble grace of assurance, may sweetly overcome. He that hath once made Christ his own, what can he desire but him? As *Psal.* 27. 4 *One thing have I desired of the Lord.* What can he love more then Christ, or love beside Christ, all his love being drowned, as it were, in that Ocean of his excellencies, and a sweet complacency found in the enjoyment of him? And as to hope, will not assurance make a Christian cry forth, *Now, Lord, what wait I for? mine hope is in thee.* And when the heart is anxious, doth not assurance make the Christian to *bear the indignation of the Lord*, and patiently submit unto the cross, since there is a sweet connexion between his cross and his Crown? *Rom.* 8 35. 36. *If he suffer with him, he shall also reign with him.* And lastly, there is this argument to press you to assurance, that it sweeteth the thoughts of death: it maketh death unto a Christian, not the King of terrors, but the King of desires: And it is upon these grounds that assurance maketh death refreshful unto a Christian.

1. He knoweth that it is the funeral of all his miseries, and the birth-day of all his blessed and eternal enjoyments. 2. That it is the coronation day of a Christian, and the day when he shal have that marriage betwixt Christ and him sweetly solemnized: and that when he is to step that last step, he knoweth that death will make him change his place, but not his company: And, O that we could once win unto this, to seal that conclusion without presumption, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his*; we might without presumption, sing one of the Songs of *Sion*, even while we are in this strange land! And taking Christ in our arms, might sweetly cry forth, *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvatiõ*. Comfort your selves in this, that all your clouds shal once pass away, and that that truth shal once come to pass which was confirmed by the oath of an Angel, with his hand lifted up towards Heaven, *that time shal be no more*. Time shal once sweetly die out in eternity, and ye may be *looking after new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*. O! long to be with him, for Christ longeth to have you with him.

SERMON VI.

JOHN 3. 23. *This is his Commandement, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ*, &c.

THere are three most precious and cardinal graces which a Christian ought mainly to pursue

purſue; there is that exalting grace of Faith, that comforting grace of Hope, and that aſpiring grace of Love: And if once a Chriſtian did take up that heavenly difference that is betwixt theſe ſiſter-graces, he might be provoked to move after them moſt ſwiftly, as the chariots of *Aminadab*. And there is this difference between theſe graces; Faith is a ſober and ſilent grace: Hope is a patient and ſubmiſſive grace: Love is an ambitious and impatient grace: Faith cryeth out; *O, my ſoul! be ſilent unto God:* Hope cryeth out, I vvill vvait patiently for the Lord, *until the viſion ſhal ſpeak:* but Love it cryeth out, *How long art thou a coming?* And it is vvaiting to hear the ſound of his feet coming *over the mountains of ſeparation.* That is the Motto of Hope, *Quod deſertur, non auferetur*; that vvhich is delayed, ſaith Hope, is not altogether taken away, and made void: And that may be the divine embleme of the grace of Love: It is ſight, infolding Deſire in its arms; and it is Deſire cloathed with wings, treading upon delay and impediments. There is this ſecond difference between theſe graces; the grace of Faith, it embraceth the truth of the promiſes: the grace of Hope, it embraceth the goodneſs of the thing that is promiſed: but that exalting grace of Love, it embraceth *the Promiſer.* Faith cryeth out, *Hath he ſpoken it? he will alſo do it.* Hope cryeth out, *Good is the Word of the Lord, be it unto thy ſervant according to thy promiſe.* And Love it cryeth out in an higher note; *As is the aple tree amongſt the trees of the wood, ſo is my well-*

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Beloved amongst the sons. Thirdly, there is that difference between these graces; Faith, it overcometh temptations; Hope, it overcometh difficulties; but Love stayeth at home, and divideth the spoil. There is a sweet correspondence between those graces in this; Faith, it fighteth and conquereth; and Hope, it fighteth and conquereth; but Love, it doth enjoy the trophies of the victory. And fourthly, there is this difference; the noble grace of Faith, it shal once evanish into sight: That noble grace of Hope, it shal once vanish into possession & enjoyment; but that constant grace of love, it shal be the eternal companion of a Christian, and shal walk in with him unto the streets of the *New Jerusalem.* And I would ask you that question, What a day shal it be when Faith shal cede to Sight? What a day shal it be when Hope shal yeeld its place to Love; and Love and Sight shal eternally sit down and solace themselves in these blessed mysteries, these everlasting consolations of heaven, world without end? And fifthly, there is this difference, less will satisfie the grace of Faith, and the grace of Hope, then will satisfie the grace of Love: Faith it will be content with the promise, & Hope will be content with the thing that is promised; but that ambitious grace of Love, it will be only content with the Promiser. Love claspeth its arms about that precious and noble object Jesus Christ. Love is a suspicious grace, it oftétimes cryeth forth, *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him*: so that Faith is oftentimes put

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to resolve suspitions of Love. I can compare these three graces to nothing so fitly, as to those three great worthies that *David* had: these three graces they will break thorow all difficulties, were it an host of *Philistins*, that so they may pleasure Christ, and may drink of the vvell of *Bethlehem*, that vvell of everlasting consolation that floweth from beneath the Throne of God. Love is like *Noah*'s dove, it never findeth rest for the sole of its foot, until once it be within that Ark, that place of repose, Jesus Christ. And sixthly, there is this last difference between them; Faith taketh hold upon the faithfulness of Christ; Hope taketh hold upon the goodness of Christ; but Love it taketh hold upon the heart of Christ. And think ye not it must be a pleasant and soul-refreshing exercise to be continually taken up in imbracing him, that is that eternal admiration of Angels? Must it not be an excellent life, dayly to be feeding upon the *finest of the wheat, and to be satisfied with honey out of the rock*? O but Heaven must be a pleasant place! And if once we would but taste of the first ripe grapes, and a cluster of wine that groweth in that pleasant land, might we not be constrained to bring up a good report of it.

But now to come to that which I purpose mainly to speak of at this time. The last thing concerning faith that we proposed from the words, was, the object upon vvhich faith exerciseth it self, vvhich is here set down to be the *Name of his Son Jesus Christ*: and that we may speak to this more clearly,

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we shal first speak a little to the Negative, what things are not the fit object of Faith: And then to the positive, shewing how this Name of God, and of his Son Christ, is that sure ground upon which a Christian may pitch his Faith. For the first, ye must know that a christian is not to build his Faith upon sense, nor sensible enjoyments: Sense may be an evidence of Faith, but it must not be the foundation of Faith. I know there are some that oft-times cry out, *Except I put my fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into the hole of his side, I will not believe*: And indeed it is a mystery unto the most part of us, to be exercising Faith upon a naked word of promise, abstracted from sense; to love an absent Christ, and to believe on an absent Christ, are the two great mysteries of christianitie. But that sense is no good foundation for Faith, may appear: 1. That Faith which is builded upon sense, is a most unconstant, a most fluctuating and transient Faith. I know sense hath its fits of love, and as it were, hath its fits of Faith: Sometimes sense is sick of love, and sometimes sense is strong in Faith; but ere six hours go about, sense may be sick of jealousie, and sick of misbelief, as ye will see from *Psal.* 30. 6, 7. sense that bold thing; it will instantly cry out, *My mountain standeth strong, I shal never be moved*; but behold how soon it changeth its note, *Thou hidest thy face, and I was troubled*; At one time it will cry forth, *Who is like unto him that pardoneth iniquitie*, and *that passeth over transgressions*? But ere many hours go about

bout, it will ſing a ſong upon another key, and cry out, *Why art thou become unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?* 2. That Faith which is built upon ſenſe, it wanteth the promiſe of bleſſedneſſe; for this is annexed to believing, that is founded upon the Word, according to that in *John* 20. 29. *Bleſſed are thoſe that have not ſeen, and yet have believed*: Nor hath that Faith that is built upon ſenſe, ſuch a ſolid joy waiting on it, as Faith that is built upon the naked Word of promiſe, as may be cleared from that Word, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. where faith exerciſing it ſelf upon Chriſt not ſeen, maketh a chriſtian *to rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glorie*; a joy that doth not attend believing founded upon ſenſe. 3. That Faith that is built upon ſenſe, it giveth not much glory to God; for Faith that is built upon ſenſe it exalteth not the faithfulneſſe of God, it exalteth not the Omnipoteney of God. I will tell you what is the divinity of ſenſe; Let me ſee, and then I will believe; but it knoweth not what it is to believe upon truſt, and becauſe the *Lord hath ſpoken in his holineſſe*: And in effect, Faith that is built upon ſenſe, is no Faith, even as *Rom.* 8. *Hope that is ſeen, is no hope*; and therefore when the Lord ſeeth a chriſtian making ſenſe an Idol, that he will not believe but when he ſeeth or feeleth, this doth often provoke the Majeſtie of the Lord to withdraw himſelf from that chriſtian, and to deny him the ſweet influences of heaven, and thoſe conſolations that are above, ſo that in an inſtant he hath both his ſenſe and his Faith to ſeek.

2. A Christian is not to make his graces the object of his faith; that is, when a Christian doth behold love burning within him, when he doth behold influences to prayer increasing, and mortification waxing strong, he is not to build his faith upon them; this was condemned in the Church, in *Ezek.* 16. 14. compared with the 15. verse: *I made thee perfect with my comliness*; but the use that thou didst make of it, thou *didst put thy trust in thy beauty*; and then thou *didst play the harlot.* It is certain that grace when it is the object of our faith, it doth provoke God to blast the lively exercise thereof, and to make a Christian oft-times have that complaint; *Wo to me, my leanness, my leanness testifieth to my face.* I will tell you three great mysteries in Christianity about grace. The first is, to ride marches between these two; not to deny what they have, and yet to be denyed to what they have: many times there is grace-denying, and not self-denying; but this is that we would press upon you, to be denyed to grace, according to that which is recorded of *Moses, his face did shine, and he knew it not:* he did misken it, as it were, and was not at all puffed up with it; for so the words we conceive may run. Secondly, it is a great difficulty for a Christian to be denyed to his self-denyal, to be humble in his being humble; for if pride can have no other foundation, it will build it self upon humility; and a Christian will grow proud in this, that he is growing humble. Thirdly, it is a difficulty for a Christian to examine his growing in grace, and

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not be puffed up: it is certain a Christian ought to examine his growth in grace humbly, according to that, *Psal.* 63. 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee, thy right hand upholdeth me.* He doth not only take notice of this, that his soul did *follow after God*; but of the measure of that pursuit, my soul *followeth hard after thee*; and yet sweetly acknowledgeth it was not his own feet which carried him, nor his own hand that kept him from falling.

3. Ye are not to build your faith upon your works, and upon the righteousness of the Law. I need not stand long to refute that practical Popery that is amongst us, that thinketh we can go to heaven through a covenant of works. I told you, not long since, what your going to heaven through a covenant of works speaketh; even this horrible blasphemy, that it was an act of monstruous folly to send Christ to die for sinners; for if you can go to heaven without him, was not then Christ crucified in vain? And I would tell you now, that this speaketh out your damnable ignorance of the weakness and deceitfulness of your own hearts. O ye that are so great defenders of salvation by the covenant of works, I beseech you, what is the reason that ye break the covenant of works oftener then any? For there is none that thinketh they will go to heaven this way, but those that are the greatest breakers of the covenant of works. And is not that inconsistent, and contradictory Divinity, your faith contradicting your practice, and your practice telling you that your faith is a lie?

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4. We must not mix our own righteousnes with Christs as the object of our believing: This is indeed an evil that often lodgeth in the bosome of the most refined hypocrite, when Satan cannot prevail to exclude Christ altogether, then he is content with that whorish Woman to *divide the child*; and let the object of our Faith be half of *Christ*, and half of *self*: And the truth is, manie of these poor unwise sons, who stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children, do willingly hearken to this overture, for fear it be presumption for such poor wretches to meddle too boldly with the riches of Christ, but it were good such weak ones would consider that word, *Rom.* 10. 2. where the Holy Ghost calleth the making use of his righteousnesse an act of submission, *They have not submitted* (saith he) *unto the Righteousnesse of Christ*. O will ye not lay this to heart, that our Lord will take your believing, or your putting on his righteousnesse for an act of great humility, and will take your misbelief as a marvelous act of the highest pride and presumption.

5. We are not to make providence the object of our faith. I know there are some that ask the ground of their right of heaven, they will tell us that God hath been kind to them all their dayes; I would onlie say to such, *He may be feeding you unto the day of slaughter, and no man knoweth love or hatred by any thing that is before him.* Thus much of the object of faith negatively. And now to speak to it positively, we see the Text holdeth out Christ him-

himself as that excellent and compleat object of Faith, *This is his Commandement, that we believe on the Name of his Son:* And thus Faith closeth with Christ under a fourfold consideration. First it closeth with God in Christ, not with God immediatly and nakedly, for he dwelleth *in light inaccessible, that no man can approach unto;* He is *higher than the heaven, what can we do? and deeper than hel, what can we know?* Job 11. Therefore we must approach unto him thorow a vail, even the vail of Christ his flesh; *Heb.* 10. God is a *consuming fire, and of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquities;* and therefore we must first cast our eyes upon that blessed *Dayes-man that laid his hands upon us both;* and look unto God as in *Christ reconciling the world to himself;* and so draw near unto him through a Mediator, who is the first and the last, and he that liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he liveth for ever to make intercession for them. Secondly, Faith closeth with Christ, as tendered freely in a covenant of promise: we wold have had nothing to do vvith Christ, if he had not been given of the Father, and offered himself in a free covenant of promise; but he being thus holden forth upon terms of free Love, vvhich doth utterly abominate hire, and so noble a proclamation issued forth under the great seal of Heaven, *That whosoever will, may come and drink of the water of life freely.* Upon this the poor creature dravveth near by vertue of a right, and stretching out the

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arms of most enlarged affections, doth run upon him with that joyful shout, *My Lord, my God*; and then maketh an absolute resignation of it self to him, which is holden out in the Scripture, by that sweet expression of *kissing of the Son*. And there are three parts of Christ's blessed body that the Christian must endeavor to kiss and embrace; the mouth of Christ, the hand of Christ, & the feet of Christ. The kissing of his feet, importeth the exercise of love; the kissing of his hands, the exercise of subjection; and the kissing of his mouth, the exercise of communion and fellowship with him. Thirdly, faith closeth with Christ, as the purchaser and meritorious cause of all the good we receive. He is the person that hath purchased all these things unto us; and there is not one blink of love, there is not the smallest enjoyment that a Christian meeteth with, but it is the price of the blood of Christ; Christ's precious blood was laid down for it. Fourthly, faith closeth with Christ as the efficient and worker of all our mercies; all our enjoyments are from him as the efficient cause; that is, he is the worker of all things in us, it is his precious fingers that must accomplish that blessed work of grace, and they are from Christ as the dispenser of these things. Christ is the great Steward of heaven that doth communicate unto believers all the treasures of the higher House; *For him hath God the Father sealed*. O! but that word that Christ once spake, is much verified by himself, *It is more blessed to give, then to receive*. Christ is that fountain and treasure

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in whom all our gifts and graces are treasured up; for before the blessing come to believers, they come to Christ as the head, according to that word, 2. *Tim.* 1. 9. *Which grace was given to us in him, before the foundations of the world were laid.* It was given to Christ before the world was made, and for that end, that it might be communicated unto all his members, and so out of his fulness we all receive, and grace for grace.

But, secondly, the Text holdeth more particularly this excellent object of Faith, to be the Name of his Son, *That ye believe in the Name of his Son.* And here indeed we may be at a stand: It is long since *Agur* did *non plus* all the world with that question, *What is his Name, and what is his Sons Name, if thou canst tell?* O how little a thing can be known of him? And, O how brutish is this generation that knoweth so much less, then might be known of him in such a day of the Gospel! But that we may speak a little according to our weak measure of Faith, as closing with the *Name* of Christ. His Name is his glorious attributes, by which he revealeth so much of himself in the Scriptures, as poor mortals can take up. We did show you before, that there was three of these that were the main pillars of justifying Faith, *Faithfulness, Omnipotency*, and *his infinite Love and Mercy* And how from these may be answered all the objections of sense, of carnal reason, and of misbelief, arising from convictions of unworthiness. And certain it is, that faith in all its conflicts, maketh much use

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of the Names of Christ. And there is not an object that a poor tempted soul can make, but Faith can frame an answer to it, out of some of these excellent Names of God, or of his Son Christ. It would be a more long-some work, than I intend, to let you see this in all; But I shall only instance that in *One glorious Name of God*, by which he proclaimeth his glory, *Exod.* 34. *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodnesse and truth: Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty*, &c. I think there are seven ordinarie objections which may be answered from that place. First, Is it an ordinarie objection which misbelievers do make, that they are under the strēgth of their corruption: that they are black as the *Tents of Kedar*, and not beautiful as the *Curtains of Solomon*: And doth not the first letter of that name answer this, that he is a mercifull Lord, the one importing his ability to save, and to bring down every high imagination? The other importing his infinite delight to help those that have no strength, and are under the power of their adversaries, the power of God being of no larger extent then his love? There is that second objection of misbelief, that we have nothing to commend us to Christ; but all that we have to boast of, are infirmities and imperfections: and this is abundantly answered from that second letter of his name; that he is Gracious, which importeth the freedome of the dispensations of his love, that hee walk-

walketh not with us, according to that rule of merit; but according to that golden and excellent rule of love. It is a great dispute whether Mercy or Grace be the greatest wonder, whether the love of Christ, or the freedom of it, be the greatest mystery; sure both these put together make up a matchless wonder? Thirdly, misbelief will object that we have forsaken him dayes without number, and that we cánot trace back our apostacy unto the first day of its rise: and is not that abundantly answered from that letter of his Name, that he is long-suffering? *This being that glorious attribute in God, the glory of which he desireth to magnifie above all his Name.* Fourthly, Misbelief doth ordinarily propose this objection, that we have multiplied our transgressions, and have *committed whooredoms under every green Tree*; and have *given gifts to our lovers*, even hyring our idols, so that we may take up that lamentation, *Is not our sin great, and our transgression infinite?* And is not this also answered from that letter of his Name, that he is *abundant in goodnesse*? That though sin abound in us, yet grace doth much more superabound in him. We confesse indeed, that there are some that may walk under that condition, that if they had no other exercise throughout erernity, but to make confession, they might confesse and never make any needlesse repetition: And truly in some respect, it is a mercy that we are Mysteries unto our selves; for if we did know compleatly the *seven* abominations of our hearts, and these mysterious actings of the body,

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of death, we vvould be in hazard to *choose strangling and death, rather than life*: Yet may not one glimpse of that abundant goodnes satisfie us, and calm the storm? Fifthly, faith misbelief, vve know that vve have broken our vowes and covenants with God, and that all these things that vve have taken on, have been but as flax before the fire of temptation; so that vve have no hope that he vvill have mercy upon those that have broken wedlock, and have not been stedfast in his covenant. But is not that abundantlie answered from that letter of his Name, *That he is abundant in Truth*; which speaketh that, That though vve deny our selves, yet he abideth faithfull, and doth not alter the vvords that hath gone out of his mouth. It is the infinite blessednesse of man, that though he be changeable, yet they have to do with one that is an unchangeable being. Sixthly, There is that objection, That notwithstanding all these things are matters of encouragement to some, yet they know not vvhether or not the lot of everlasting love hath fallen upon them: And whether their names be in the ancient records of heaven. But this is answered from that letter of his name, *He keepeth mercy for thousands*, which showeth us that great number of those upon whom the lot of everlasting love shall fall; And if there were no other sentence in all the Scripture, this might be a sufficient matter of a song, & might make us cry out, *Who is like unto him, whose compassions have no end*? And who desires to *magnifie his mercy above all his works*: And lastlie, misbelief

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maketh this objection, they have sinned not only against light, not only against vows, not only after much enjoyment of God, but even after the application of threatnings: So that they conceive, *that their Maker will not have mercy upon such.* Yet this is fully answered likewise from that letter of his Name; *He forgiveth iniquity, transgression and sin:* which three words do abundantly speak forth, that there is no transgression which he will not pardon; there being but one particular amongst all that innumerable number of sins which lodgeth in the heart of fallen men, that he declared unpardonable: & there is none of our diseases that is above the infinite art of love; and concerning which, we can take up that complaint, *There is no balm in Gilead, and there is no Physician there.* And though providence may muster up many impossibilities, yet let faith take the promise in the one hand, & impossibilities in the other, and desire God to reconcile them; that if we cannot see any connexion between providence and the word, yet may we reflect upon the Omnipotency of God, that can make things that are seeming contrary sweetly agree together; the Cõmentary will never destroy the Text, nor providence will never destroy the faithfulness of God. And let me give you this advice, that those objections of misbelief which you cannot answer, and in a manner putteth you to a *non plus*, and when ye have looked over all the *Names of God*, ye cannot find an answer to them, sleight them and cover them, as we have often told you, was the practice of

believing *Abraham*, *Rom.* 4. 19. where that ſtrong objection of misbelief appearing before his eyes, the *deadneſs of his body*, and *the barrenneſs of Sarahs womb*; it is recorded of him, *he conſidered not theſe things*, as it were; he had a divine tranſition from the objections of misbelief to the acting of Faith: And this is clear from *Matth.* 15. 25. 26. where that ſtrong objectiō of misbelief being propoſed againſt that woman, that ſhe was not within the compaſs of Chriſts cōmiſſion, ſhe hath a noble way of anſwering with this; *Lord have mercy upon me.* And (if ſo we may ſpeak) Faith hath a kind of divine impertinency in anſwering the objections of misbelief, or rather a holy ſleighting of them that gaineth the victory, when cavelling with temptations wil not do it. The like alſo may be inſtanced in his Sons name: O how glorious titles are given to *that Prince of the Kings of the earth*, and to that *Plant of renown*, upon which the weakeſt faith may caſt anchor, and ride out the greateſt ſtorm. I ſhal not detain you long on this ſubject; but this we would have you know, that there is no ſtraint or difficulty that a Chriſtian can be expoſed unto; but there is ſome name or attribute of Chriſt that may ſweetly anſwer that difficulty, & make up that diſadvantage. Is a Chriſtian expoſed unto afflictions and troubles in a preſent world, let him comfort himſelf in this, that Chriſt is the ſhadow *of a great Rock in a wearied land.* Is a Chriſtian under inward anxiety and vexation of mind, let him comfort himſelf in this, *that Chriſt is the God of peace, & of all conſolation.* Is a Chriſtian under

under darkneſs and confuſion of ſpirit, let him comfort himſelf in this, that Chriſt is the *father of lights*, and is the *eternal wiſdom of God*. Is a Chriſtian under the convictions of this, that he is under the power and dominion of his luſts, let him comfort himſelf in this, that Chriſt is redemption; yea (that I ſtay no longer) if it were poſſible that a Chriſtian could have a neceſſity that he could not find a name in Chriſt to anſwer it, he may lawfully frame a name to Chriſt out of any promiſe in all the book of God, & he ſhould find it forth-coming for the relieving and making up of that neceſſity, God would not diſappoint his expectation.

There is yet one thing further, in reference to the object of Faith, which we ſhal deſire you to take notice of; and it is the way of Faiths cloſing with its noble object, and its reſting on him; and this we conceive may be excellently taken up by our conſidering of the many ſeveral names that faith getteth in Scripture beyond any other of the graces of the Spirit. It is called looking, *Iſai.* 45. 22. *Looking unto me.* It is called, *abiding in Chriſt*, *Joh.* 15. 4. *Abide in me.* It is called, a keeping ſilence unto God, *Pſal* 37. 7. *My ſoul truſt in God*; or as the word is in the original, *My ſoul, be ſilent unto God*: & that in *Pſ.* 62. 1. *My ſoul waiteth*; or as the word is, *Truly my ſoul is ſilent unto God.* Likewiſe Faith is called a leaning, *Pſ.* 7. 15. *I have leaned upon thee frō my mothers womb.* Faith it is called, *an eating of Chriſts fleſh*, *Joh.* 6. 53. Faith it is called, a caſting of *our burden upon God*, *Pſ* 55. 22 *Caſt your burden upon God.* And Faith it

is called, *a coming unto God*, *Matth.* 11. 28. And according to theſe different names, there are ſeven noble properties and matchleſs differences of this grace of Faith. The firſt is, that this is the grace by which a Chriſtian doth enjoy much communion with God; hence it is called a *looking*, which importeth that Faith is a continual contemplation of the immortal ſoul upon that precious and excellent object Jeſus Chriſt. There is that ſecond property of Faith, that it is that grace by which a communion with God is maintained; hence it is called, an *abiding in God*. It is that grace which maketh Chriſt and the believer to dwel together. The third property of Faith is, that it is a moſt ſubmiſſive grace; hence it is called, a *keeping ſilence unto God*. Faith, as it were, knoweth not what it is to repine. It is the noble excellency of Faith, it never knew what it was to miſconſtruct Chriſt. It is the noble excellency of Faith, it never knew what it was to paſs an evil report upon Chriſt. Faith it will promiſe good things to a Chriſtian in the darkeſt night: for when Love asketh Faith that queſtion, *Iſa.* 21. 11. 12. *Watchmen, what of the night? Watchmen, what of the night?* Or, when ſhal the morning break? Faith anſwereth it with the words that follow (only a little inverting the order) *The night cometh, and alſo the morning*. The morning is approaching that admitteth of no following night. There is that fourth property of faith, it is the grace that keepeth a Chriſtian in perſeverance, by its building upon the rock: hence it is called, a *leaning*

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upon God; for a Christian by faith doth perpetually join himself to Christ, so that what ever trouble he be cast in, by Faith he cometh up out of that *wilderness, leaning upon his Beloved*; and by Faith he is led up *to the Rock that is higher then he*, where he may sit in safety, and even *laugh at death and destruction*, when assailing him. There is that fifth property of Faith, that it is the grace that bringeth satisfaction to the spiritual senses of a Christian, by a close and particular application of Christ, as the nourishment of the soul: hence it is called, an *eating of the flesh of Christ*. There are three senses that Faith satisfieth; Faith satisfieth the sense of sight, it satisfieth the sense of taste, and it satisfieth the sense of touch. Faith will make a Christian *handle that eternal Word of life*. Faith will make a Christian see *that noble plant of renown*: and Faith will make a Christian *taste and see how gracious the Lord is*. And, no doubt, those that have once satisfied their sight, they will be longing to satisfie their taste. There is that sixth property of Faith, it is that grace which giveth rest unto a Christian: hence it is called, a *casting of our burden upon him*. It is, as it were, the soul giving unto Christ that unsupportable yoke of our iniquities, and taking from Christ that easie and portable yoke of his commandements. And seventhly, there is that last property of Faith, it is that grace by which sanctification is promoved: hence it is called, *a coming to Christ*. It is the soul in a divine motion and travelling from the land of *Egypt*, unto the land of

Canaan. Faith, it is the ſoul in a pleaſant motion from the land of the North, the land of our captivity, unto that land of perfect liberty, all along going out *by the footſteps of the flock, and walking in that new and living way*, even in him *who is the way, the truth and the life.*

And now for a more full application of this, we ſhal ſpeak but two things further. 1. We would have it conſidered that there are ſome that come unto the covenant of promiſe with leſs difficulty, and after a more divine and Evangelick way; and there are ſome that cloſe with Chriſt in a more difficult and legal way; there are ſome that before they can come to Mount *Sion*, they muſt dwel fourty dayes at Mount *Sinai*; there are ſome before the decree of heaven ſhal be given to them, they muſt roar as an ox, and muſt cover themſelves with ſackcloath, having aſhes upon their heads; we muſt be a *Benoni* before we be a *Benjamin*; that is, we muſt be a ſon of *ſorrow*, before we can be a ſon of *conſolation.* But this is certain, that Chriſt leadeth ſometimes ſome to himſelf through a valley of roſes: And I would only have you take notice of theſe two, which though we conceive they be not infallible in the rule, yet oftentimes experience maketh them out to be truth. 1. That there are three ſorts of perſons who are moſt ordinarily brought under great terror ere they cloſe with Chriſt. Firſt, thoſe who have committed ſome groſs and abominable ſin that is moſt contradicting unto the light of nature. Secondly, that perſon that ſinneth much againſt

againſt light before converſion: Hence it is obſerved in all the Books of the Goſpel, and in the Book of the *Acts*, there was a more Goſpel and love-way of converting the Gentils, then was of converting the *Jews*: See *Acts* 2. 37. there is a ſharp law exerciſed amongſt them who had crucified the Lord of life; and *Acts* 9. *Paul* that had been a grievous perſecuter, at his converſion, he is firſt ſtricken dead to the ground, before he be made a captive of the love of Chriſt, and conſtrained to cry out, *What wilt thou have me to do?* But look to *Acts* 8. and *chap.* 19. and there ye will find a more fair and ſmooth way of begetting ſons to Chriſt. And thirdly, that perſon that is much in conceit of his own righteouſneſs, he uſeth to be brought to Chriſt through much terror and exerciſe of the Law; that is clear in *Paul*, his condition alſo, *Phil.* 3. and *Acts* 9. compared; and certainly whoever thinketh to come that length in ſelf-abaſement, and will count as the Apoſtle doth in that Chapter, muſt dwel many dayes at Mount *Sinai*, and learn his Arithmetick there. 2 We would have you take notice of this, that though the perſon that is brought to Chriſt in a more ſmooth and Evangelical way, may have the preeminency of the perſon that is brought to Chriſt after a more legal and terrible way in ſome things: Yet we conceive that a Chriſtian that is brought to Chriſt through much of the exerciſe of the Law, and through many of the thunderings of Mount *Sinai*, after he hath won to ſee his right in Chriſt, he is more conſtant in the

exercise of Faith; and the reason of it is, because that an ordinary ground of misbelief, is our not distinct uptaking either of the time of our conversiõ, which is oft-times hid frõ those persõs that are converted in a more evangelick way; as likewise this, that those persons that are brought to Christ in a more Gospel Chariot, are sometimes put to debates, whether ever they were under the exercise of the Law, and this maketh them often (as it were) to raze the foundation, and to cry forth, *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord.* And now to shut up our discourse we shal adde this one word of Exhortation, that ye would carefully lay hold upon that noble object, and exercise your Faith upon him; and I shal say but this, that all these that have this noble grace of Faith, and that are heirs of that everlasting inheritance: There is a fourfold crown prepared for you: there is a crown of life that is prepared for him that shall *fight that good fight of Faith*; but what may you say is a crown of life, except we have joy waiting upon that life? for what is life without joy, but a bitterness and a burden to it self? therefore you shall have *a crown of joy*; but what were a crown of life, and a joy, except wee had the grace of holiness, and were compleat in that? therefore ye shall have also a *crown of righteousnesse*; but what were life, joy and righteousnesse without glory? therefore ye shall have likewise *a crown of glory*; but what of all these, if that crown should once fall from our head, and we should be deprived of our kingdom? therefore take this

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to make up all the reſt, it is an *eternal crown of glory*. That word in *Prov.* 27. near the cloſe, *the crown* (ſaith *Solomon*) *doth not endure for ever*; but this precious crown that the hands of Chriſt ſhal fix upon the head of an overcoming chriſtian, this is the motto that is engraven upon it, *Unchangeable and Eternal, Eternal and Unchangeable*: And O what a day ſuppoſe ye that ſhal be, when that precious crown ſhall be put upon our heads? What think you will be the difference betwixt Chriſt and believers in heaven? They ſhall have theſe four crowns which are indeed one; but Chriſt ſhal have upon his head many crowns, according to that word, *Rev.* 19.12. But let me ſay one word alſo to you who are ſtrangers from God, and are deſtitute of the grace of Chriſt, and will not by faith cloſe with this excellent object; There is a fourfold crown that once ſhal be put upon your heads; but do not miſinterprete the viſion, there is a difference betwixt the *Butler* and the *Baker*; ye may propheſie good things to your ſelves; but there is a crown of death which ye ſhal once have put upon your heads, ye ſhall be alwayes dying, and never able to die; there is a crown of ſorrow that ye ſhal have put upon your heads, whē ye ſhal eternally ſigh forth that ſad lamētation, *O to be annihilate and reduced unto nothin!* When the reduction of you unto nothing would be a heaven, when ye ſhal be tormented in thoſe everlaſting flames! And I would ſay this by the way, ye will be all miſerable, and comfortleſſe one to another; there will be no ground of conſolation that

ye ſhal reap, for the community of your ſorrow ſhal increaſe the degrees of that ſorrow: And there is another crown alſo that ye ſhal put on, and that is a crown of *ſin*, in ſtead of that *crown of righteouſneſs*. Would ye know your exerciſe, O ye that are predeſtinate unto theſe everlaſting paines? Would ye know your exerciſe? It is this, ye ſhal eternally *blaſpheme* and *curſe* the God that made you. I am perſwaded of this, that the terrors of Hell will afflict you more, and doth, then that of the ſinning perpetually in Hell: you would think nothing, many of you, to be in Hell, if there were no pain there; for the exerciſe of ſin it would be your delight and life; but be perſwaded of it, that when your conſcience is awaked, the exerciſe of ſinning ſhal exceedingly aggravate your pain. And there is this crown, laſtly, that ye ſhal put on, and that is, the crown *of ſhame*: the Prophet *Iſaiah* maketh mention of a *crown of pride*; but you that have put on that crown of pride, you ſhal once put on that crown of everlaſting *confuſion and ſhame*, when you ſhal not be able to lift up your eyes to him *whom you have pierced*. I would fain deſire you to know what will be your exerciſe at theſe three dayes, what will be your exerciſe when death ſhal be ſummoning you to remove, and you ſhal firſt be entered heirs unto theſe everlaſting pains. I am perſwaded you will reflect much: will ye not reflect upon many Sermons that you have heard, wherein you have been invited to partake of the ſweet offers of Salvation? I remember of one that upon his

his death-bed cryed forth, *A world for time, a world for one inch of time!* One that perhaps did hold his head high, and no doubt was greater then the greateſt here: His crown would not purchaſe one inch of time, but dying with this, *call time again, call time again*, that petition was denied; and ſo ſhal it be, I fear, to the moſt part that are here. I think it was a pretty Hieroglyphick of the *Egyptians*, they painted Time with three heads: the firſt head that painted out time that was paſt, *was a greedy wolf gaping*, which imported this, that our time paſt was miſpent, and there was nothing left, but like a wolf to gape for it again. And there was that ſecond head of a *roaring Lyon round*, which imports the time preſent; and for this end was ſo painted, that people might lay hold upon their preſent opportunities, otherwiſe it would be the matter of their ruine, and their eternal undoing. And there was that laſt head, which was of a *deceitful dog fawning*, which ſignified that people they deceive themſelves with the time to come, thinking they will be religious at their death, and that they will overcome at their death. But this is a flattery no better then the fawning of a mad dog. I think we may learn much of this, even to be provoked to lay hold upon our golden opportunities, that we ſell not our time, but that we buy it. There are two things that a Chriſtian muſt not ſell; that is, ſell not the *Truth*, but buy it; and ſell not your time, but buy it. I am perſwaded of this, that one moment of time is worth ten thouſand worlds, if improved. And I

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would ask you, What advantage shal you have of all things that you have tormented your selves about, when time shal be no more? I suppose indeed this is an ordinary evil amongst the people of this age, of which we have our own share and portion. There are many that envy godliness and the godly; *the excellent ones that are in the earth*, and think it is pleasure to vent their malice against such. I know that ordinary practice it is older, by a thousand years, then themselves, that they persecute godliness under the name of hypocrisie: they call godliness hypocrisie, and upon that account they begin to speak maliciously against it. Only I would ask you this question, What will you say in that day when Christ will ask that question of you that *Gideon* asked of *Zeba* and *Zalmunna*, Who are those that you killed with your tongue? Must it not be answered, *Every one did resemble the person of a King*? O! will you not believe? Will you not close with Christ? I know it is ordinary that we run upon these two extreams; sometimes we do not believe the promises of the Gospel. But I would only desire to know, what if it had been so ordered in the infinite wisdom of God, and that all the letters of this book should have been threatnings, what should have been our lot, if all the promises should have been scraped out of it? But certainly this must be your lot, all the promises of the book of this covenant shal be taken from you, and all the curses thereof shal be a fleeing roll that shal enter within your houses, and there shal

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eternally remain. Know this, O you that are enemies to Christ, know it and think upon it; *Every battel of the warriour is with confused noise, and with garments rowled in blood*; but that warre which Christ shal have against the *hypocrites in Zion*, and those that are ignorant of him, and will not close with him, it shal be *with fewel of fire, and eternal indignation.* O! what will be your thoughts, suppose you, when Christ shal come with that two-edged sword of the fury of the Lord, to enter to fight with you? It is no delightsome exercise. O that you were *not almost*, but *altogether perswaded to be Christians*; & that once Christ might conquer you with that two-edged sword that *proceedeth out of his mouth*; that so you might subject your selves to him, and make him the object of your faith! Now to him that hath engraven upon his *vesture, and on his thigh, that he is the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords*, we desire to give praise.

A SERMON
Concerning the
GREAT SALVATION.

Heb. 2. 3. *How ſhal we eſcape if we neglect ſo great Salvation which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?*

THis everlaſting Goſpel vvhich is preached unto you, is that glorious Star, which muſt lead us to the place where bleſſed Chriſt doth ly. This Goſpel and glad tidings of the great Salvation, is come near unto you: And Chriſt is ſtanding at the everlaſting doors of your hearts, deſiring that ye would open unto him. There is that one great requeſt, which heaven this day hath to preſent unto you, and it is that ye would at laſt embrace this great ſalvation freely offered by him. It is the thing for which ye are called to mourn this day, that ſince the dayes of your fathers, and ſince the beginning of your own dayes, ye have ſtopped your ears from the ſweet and chanting voice of this bleſſed Charmer. *Ye would never dance to Chriſt when he piped; Neither would ye weep to him when he lamented.*

But to come to the words which we have read unto you: The Apoſtle (in the former Chapter) had

had been discovering most divinely of the matchlesse and incomparable excellencies which are in our Lord Jesus: And in the first verse of this second Chapter, he draweth forth an Exhortation from his former doctrine, which in short is this, That they would take heed to the blessed Doctrine of the Gospel, and not *at any time to let it slip out of their minds*; and that they would keep this Gospel as a Jewel of great price, and would not sell it, but that they would be induced to buy it. And this exhortation he presseth by two Arguments.

The first Argument is in the second verse, where he saith, *If the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward*, &c. That is, if the transgression of the Law which was delivered but by the Ministry of Angels, and every disobedience to it was so severely punished; let that provoke you to take heed that ye transgres not the precious Gospel which was spoken by the Lord himself.

The second Argument in the words which we have read unto you, it is taken from the certain and infallible stroak of the justice of God, which shall come upon those who slight this great Salvation; it is impossible (saith he) that there can be a City of refuge for those who slight this great Salvation.

Now in the words which we have read, there are these six things to be considered.

I. First, That it is an evil incident to the hearers of this precious Gospel and great Salvation, to slight and

and undervalue it: this is clearly presupposed in the words; otherwise there had been no ground or access for the Apostle to threaten so terrible things against the slighters of it.

II. The second thing to be considered in the words, is, that the stroak & ruine of those who slight this great Salvation, is certain and infallible, it will surely come upon them: this is clear from these words, *How shal we escape?* As if he had said, there is no imaginable way for us to escape, if we neglect (this) *so great salvation*: we may have a City of refuge when we are pursued by the Law, or when we are pursued by afflictions, and we may escape when we are pursued otherwayes by the Justice of God; but if once we slight this great Salvation, there remaineth no City of refuge (no door of escape left open) unto us: for where will the person flee that slighteth this great Salvation?

III. There is this third thing whereof we shal take notice from the words, that the stroak of the Justice of God cometh justly upon them who slight this great Salvation: and truly it is a most equal and reasonable stroak, which is also clear from the words, *How shal we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* Where he puts it home to their consciences, as if he had said, Think ye not that it is just and righteous, that if ye slight this great Salvation, there should not be a door of escape left open unto you. He putteth the question home to their conscience, to answer, yea, or no.

IV. The fourth thing to be considered in the words

words, is this, that the slighting this great salvation is a sin that hath many aggravations which attend and wait upon it. And it hath two great aggravations from the words which I have read, the first *great aggravation* in that word of the Text, *great salvation*, as if he had said, if it were not a great salvation, you might have some cloak or excuse for your slighting of it: but seing it is such a great and eternall salvation, there is now no cloak left for your sin. The second observation is from the certainty of this salvation in these words, *which at first began to be spoken of by the Lord, & was confirmed unto us by those that heard him*, viz. *His Apostles*; Whereby he telleth them, this great salvation is no notion nor fancy but a most certain, sure and real salvation, which yet they slight.

V. The fifth thing whereof we shal take notice from the words is this, That there are no persons (be who they will, Minister or people) who slight this great salvation, that shal have a door of escape. Hence it is that the Apostle putteth himself among the rest, saying, *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* that is, *How shal I* Paul *escape if I neglect so great salvation, and so frustrat the grace of God?*

VI. Sixthly, We would take notice of this from the words, That not only heart-despising of this great salvation, but even also the very neglecting of it, hath a certain infallible and unspeakable ruine attending upon it.

Now before we begin to speak to any of these six

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things (which we have obſerved from theſe words) there are theſe two things whereunto we ſhall ſpeak a little for clearing of the words; firſt, what is meant here by great ſalvation: Secondly, how it is ſaid that Chriſt was the firſt preacher of it.

Firſt, We conceive that by the great ſalvation is underſtood the Goſpel, as is clear, *Eph.* 1.13 where it is called *the Goſpel of our ſalvation*; and *Acts* 13.26. it is called *the word of this ſalvation*; ſo that by the word of this ſalvation is underſtood the Goſpel, and thoſe precious offers which are contained in it. And we conceive it may be called a great ſalvation, in theſe eight reſpects.

I. Firſt, it is called the great ſalvation in reſpect of the price which was laid down for it; there being no leſs price laid down to purchaſe this great ſalvation, than the *blood of the Son of God*. From whence then doth ſalvation flow unto you? it comes running to you in a ſtream of the blood of the Son of God: this is clear, *Heb.* 9.12. *Neither by the blood of Goats and Calves, but by his own blood he entered in once unto the holy place, having obtained eternall redemption for us.*

II. Secondly, It is called a great ſalvation in reſpect of the many difficulties and oppoſitions which ly in the way of bringing it about. What great impediments (ſuppoſe ye) lay in Chriſt's way before he could accompliſh and bring about this great ſalvation? Was not the juſtice of God to be ſatisfied? Was he not to die, and to be made like unto one of us? Was he not to ly in the grave? And was he not

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to bear the torments of hell before this great salvation could be accomplished and brought to passe? There were such impediments in the way of bringing about this great salvation, that if all the Angels in Heaven had been set to work, they had been all crushed under it; had it been but that one great impediment to *satisfie the justice*, and pacifie the wrath of God, even that was a passe, through which none could go but the eternall Son of God. It was so guarded, that none durst adventure to enter it (much lesse could any win through it) save he only *who was mighty to save.*

III. Thirdly, It is called a great salvation in respect of that high estimation which the Saints have of it. O what an high estimation have the Saints of this Gospel-salvation! there is no mercy which they think comparable to this; all other mercies are but little *Zoars* in comparison of this great mercy and Gospel-salvation.

IV. Fourthly, It is called a great salvation in respect of those noble effects which this Salvation bringeth about and produceth. Some of the great effects of the Gospel, *David* hath cleared, *Psal.* 19. 7,8,9,10. Is not this a great effect (of this Gospel-Salvation) to bring us out of nature into an estate of grace? And that is an effect of this great Salvation. Is not this a great effect to make us who were enemies, become friends? And that is an effect of this great Salvation. Is not this a great effect to make us who were moving in the way to hell, move in the way to heaven? And that is an effect of this great Salva-

ſalvation. Is not this a great effect to make us who were ſo *far off* to be now *made near*? And yet that is an effect of this great ſalvation. And is not this a great effect to make us who were *darkneſs become light in the Lord*? And that is the great effect of this Goſpel-ſalvation. Yea, I may ſay time would fail me to tell of all the great effects of this great ſalvation. But O will ye come and ſee, and that wil beſt reſolve the queſtion unto you, what the noble effects of this great ſalvation are.

V. Fifthly, it is called a great ſalvation in reſpect of the great advantages which doth redound to the perſon who embraceth it. Firſt, is not heaven a noble advantage? and that is the gain which attendeth the embracers of this great ſalvation. Secondly, is not Jeſus Chriſt a notable advantage? And yet he is the advantage which attendeth the embracers of this great ſalvation. Thirdly, is not eternal communion with God a noble advantage? and that advantage attendeth the embracers of this great ſalvation. Fourthly, is not eternal liberation from the body of death a great advantage? and that attendeth the embracers of this great ſalvatiō. Fifthly, is not eternal ſinging in the enjoyment of God a great advantage? and that attendeth the embracers of this ſalvation. Sixthly, is not eternall ſeeing of God as he is, a great & noble advantage? And yet this (as all the former) attendeth the embracers of this great ſalvation. Yea, would you be rich? O then embrace this great ſalvation. Wold ye be honourable? Come and embrace this great ſalvati-

vation. Would you be eternally happy? O then come and partake of this great salvation.

VI. Sixthly, it called a great salvation, in respect of all other salvations that ever were accomplished. There was never a salvation or victory obtained by any General or Captain (unto a land or people) that could have the name of great salvation in comparison of this.

VII. Seventhly, it is called a great salvation in respect of the Authority of it; we have spoken of the greatnesse (as to the meritorious cause) of it, and how great things it doth effectuate; and also in respect of the authority of it, it is a great salvation. Would you know who is the Author of this great salvation? It is Christ, *Heb.* 5. 9. *He became the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.* And must not this salvation be sutable to him who is the Author of it? this is one of the most noble and irradiant beams of the Majesty of the Son of God the Mediator, that he is the Author of this great salvation.

VIII. Eightly, it is called a great salvation in respect of the continuance and duration of it. It is not a salvation which is but for a day; but it is an eternal salvation, *Heb.* 9. 12. *He obtained eternal redemption for us.*

Now the second thing whereunto we shal speak for clearing of the words, is this, *viz.* How it is said that Christ was the first preacher of this eternal salvation. We do not think that the words are to be understood, that the Gospel and this great salvation

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was never preached before Christ came in the flesh, but we think the meaning of the words may be one of these three, if not all of them.

I. First, that all the preaching of this great salvation under the Law, did come very far short in in the point of fulnesse, in comparison of Christs preaching of it; therefore is Christ said to be the first preacher of this great salvation; as if he had said, I know *Adam* he preached of this great salvation, and *Enoch* he preached of this great salvation; and the twelve Patriarchs they preached of this great salvation; and all the Prophets who went before Christ, and are now in heaven, they preached of this great Salvation; but all their preaching deserved not the name of preaching, in comparison of Christs: for *never man spake as he spake.* Thus Christ was the first great preacher of this great salvation.

II. Secondly, This may be the meaning of it, that Christ was the first preacher of this great salvation in respect of his clear way of preaching of it; for he was the first preacher of it without types and shadows; he was the first preacher of it clearly and fully, with so much demonstration and power of the spirit.

III. Thirdly, The meaning of this (that Christ was the first preacher of this great salvation) may relate to his appearing to *Adam* in Paradise, when he became the first and great preacher of this salvation, when he did speak that word unto him, *The seed of the woman shall tread down the head of the serpent.*

pent. The first glorious preaching of this great salvation was when Christ preached to *Adam* in Paradise. And that was the first and glorious morning of this blessed Gospel.

Now we shall speak a little to the first of these six things which we have observed from these words; *viz.* That there are many within the visible Church who are neglecters and slighters of this great salvation: (do ye not all take with it?) it is clear, *Matt.* 23. towards the close; and chap 22. 5. where those persons being invited to come to the marriage, or feast of the Gospel, it is said of them, *they made light of it*; which are the same words in our Text: And *Luke* 14. 18. where they were invited to come, it is said, *They all with one consent began to make their excuse*; and *Isai.* 28. 2. *This is the rest wherewith ye shall make the weary to rest, this is the refreshing, yet they will not hear.* Now is there a person here, who dare deny this charge, that he is a slighter of this great salvation? I confess I am afraid that you will not take with it; therefore I shall propose these eight sorts of persons who are slighters of this great salvation, and I charge you, as you will answer to God one day, that you search your hearts, whether you be among the number (in the catalogue) of the slighters of this great salvation.

I. The first sort of persons who are slighters of this great salvation, are those persons who go about to establish their own righteousness, and will not submit to the righteousness of Christ; (in a word)

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it is that ſort of perſons who think they may win to heaven by a covenant of works, and will not take the Goſpels way of travelling to heaven in the covenant of grace. And ſurely there is not a perſon here who hath not that curſed inclination to be as little oblidged to Chriſt for his ſalvation, as he can: we would go to heaven without the way, which is Chriſt. And, believe me, there are many in this Congregation who go thus about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs. And I ſhal propoſe ſix ſorts of perſons who fall under this firſt rank.

1. The firſt ſort are thoſe who truſt on their own civility, and think that will carry them to heaven: thoſe are the perſons who go about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs. Say they, I defie the world to ſay any thing to me, *I was evermore an honeſt man*, and I truſt therefore that I ſhal go to heaven. But I ſay to thee, O Atheiſt! that thou art, thou ſhalt never win to heaven by thoſe means, till thou come to Chriſt with this, *All my righteouſneſs are as filthy rags.*

2. The ſecond ſort are thoſe who build their confidence upon their denial of their good works, but yet never come this length to make uſe of Jeſus Chriſt.

3. The third ſort are thoſe who build their confidence upon their duties; they think they will come to heaven by their good prayers, by their reading, and by their faſting, like unto that Phariſee, Luke 18. 11. *I thank God, I am not like other men, for I faſt twice in the week: I pay tithes of all that*

I poſſeſs. But I lay unto thee, thy duties will never bring thee to heaven, if Chriſt be not the end of all thy duties, nor can you perform a duty without him.

4. The fourth ſort of perſons who fall under this firſt rank of ſlighters of the great Salvation, are thoſe who truſt on their convictions: if they have once been convinced of their ſin and miſerable eſtate, they think there is no more to do, Chriſt will never reject them; ſo they ſit down and build their hope upon theſe convictions.

5. The fifth ſort of perſons, are thoſe who build their confidence upon their reſolutions; ſay they, oftentimes have I reſolved to be a better man then I am; therefore I think (which is the firſt deluſion of many) that *God will accept the will for the deed*; but it had been good for many ſuch a word had not been in the Bible, or that their curſed eyes had never read it. But know this, that though thou hadſt as ſtrong reſolutions as *Peter*, or as good wiſhes as *Balaam* had, if thou never labor to bring them to practice, God ſhal ſay to thee, *Depart from me, I know you not.* Any of you who build upon your reſolutions, you will build upon a ſandy foundation, theſe being many times a *goodneſs, but like the morning dew.*

6. And the ſixth ſort of perſons who fall under this firſt rank of ſlighters of this great Salvation (and wherein the evil is moſt ſubtil) are thoſe who build their ſalvation upon their graces; theſe alſo go about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs: But I ſay to ſuch, their graces cannot be the foundation

of their hope, although they may be as evidences to ſtrengthen their hope. Now, are there none here who fall under this firſt rank of ſlighters of the great Salvation? Or are there none here who will confeſs they have gone about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſſe? I ſay to thee who wilt confeſſe, put a rope about thy neck, and come to Chriſt; for he is a merciful King. I ſay to thee, come to Chriſt with this, *All my righteouſneſs is like filthy rags.* And if thou wilt come with this in ſincerity, he ſhal ſay, *Bring forth the white robe, and put it upon him.* If thou canſt be brought to ſpeak that in ſincerity to Chriſt, there ſhal be no more betwixt Chriſt and thee, but, *Come and cloath him with the white robe.*

II. Secondly, thoſe perſons ſlight the great Salvation, who delay their taking hold of the precious offers of the Goſpel: for there are many, when we preach this Goſpel, and when we hold out the great Salvation unto them, who ſay, *I will follow Chriſt, but I muſt firſt go home and bury my father;* and ſo they delay to take hold of this great Salvation. But I ſay to you, whoever you be, that thus delay to take hold on this great Salvation, you are the ſlighters of it. Is there a perſon within theſe doors who dare but acknowledge that he hath ſlighted this great Salvation, and delayed to embrace it? O! tell me, what do your conſciences ſpeak? Are there any but they muſt acknowledge they come under this ſecond rank? And I ſay to you who have thus delayed, will you yet embrace it? I ſay even

even unto you who are old men, now past sixty years, and have slighted this great Salvation so long, yet this day this great Salvation is offered unto you. What say you to it? O! what do you say to this offer? Are ye saying, I must now delay, and not receive this great Salvation, till mine Harvest be by and over? I say unto thee, that the Harvest of the wrath of God is ripe, and he shal put in his sickle, and cut thee down. I shal say no more to those who thus slight this great Salvation, but this, *Why stand ye all the day in the market place idle, and doing nothing?* O! will you be at last induced to take and embrace this great Salvation, before it be hid from your eyes.

III. Thirdly, those persons are the slighters of this great Salvation, who complement with Christ when they are invited to come and partake of it, and say silently to the Minister, or rather to their own consciences: *I pray you, have me excused at this time*; as those, *Luke* 14. 18. But I would only ask of such, Have you any lawful excuse why you will not come and partake of this great Salvation? Is there any person here that hath any lawful excuse to present? I shal never take that off your hand, *Have me excused.* But be sure of this, I shal never excuse you, but accuse you: therefore I desire that those persons who have slighted the great Salvation, by complementing with Christ, that they would complement no more with him at all, but now embrace it.

IV. The fourth sort of persons who slight this

great Salvation, are those who give way to discouragements and unbelief, so that they will not come and partake of this great Salvation: I say, such of you are slighters of it, and Christ will esteem you such. Oh! if ye knew the worth and vertue of this great Salvation, there would not be a temptation you could meet with, that would hinder you from embracing it: but if thou couldst not answer these temptations, thou wouldst not own them: I say unto such undervaluers and slighters of the great Salvation, as discouraged persons (*And those who stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children*) that when you cannot answer your objections, which hinders you from closing with Christ, I intreat you, disown them, as if ye heard them not. Say ye, Think ye this lawful? I say, it is both lawful and expedient; for it was the practice of believing *Abraham*; *He considered not his own body*, being dry as an old stick, *nor the deadness of Sarahs womb.* He did not consider these things which might have been objections to keep him from believing. He might have started at these two objections; Alace! I am old; and that objection could he not answer; and my wife is past child-bearing; neither could he answer that objection. What then did he with them? He slighted them both, and considered them not. Secondly, I would say this to you who thus slight it, because of discouragements; If ye did know the worth of the great Salvation, which is in this Gospel redemption that is offered to you, although ye had an army of objections to go through, ye would

would go through them, *to get a drink of the water of this well of Bethlehem.*

V. The fifth sort of persons who slight this great Salvation, are those who will not do so much as take care and give pains to hear this great Salvation offered unto them; for there are some persons, who (if they come to the Church) desire to sit fartheſt off, and so never take care to hear a word of this great Salvation; and such are dreadful slighters of it. Like unto these mentioned, *Jer.* 6. 10. *To whom shal I speak, and give warning that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken. Isai.* 28. 12. *But they would not hear. Jer.* 7. 10. *Who say we are delivered to do all these abominations: Yet they did come and stand before him, in the house which is called by his Name.*

VI. Sixthly, those persons are slighters of the great Salvation, who, when they hear it, are no more (nay not so much) affected with it, then if we were telling unto them the most senseless history of *Thomas the Rymer*, or some other old fable. Like unto these mentioned, *Jer.* 6. 10. *The word of the Lord is unto them a reproach, they have no delight in it.* I would pose you all, as in the sight of the Author of this great Salvation, men or women, did you ever see your selves; or took ye ever pains, to bring up your hearts to the love of this great Salvation? Was it ever the rejoicing of your hearts, that Christ died and rose again? I do certainly believe it, and I am perswaded, that there are decrees past in Heaven against many of you, *That in hearing ye shal hear, but*

not understand, and in seeing ye shal see, and shal not perceive: for God hath made your hearts harder then the flint or adamant, so that ye shal refuse to return when he doth exhort you. Believe me (if I may so speak) I think there is as much probability that the stones in the wall would hear (if we would speak to them) as soon as many of you.

VII. Seventhly, those persons are slighters of this great Salvation, who never did complain that they wanted a right to this great Salvation: I hope some of you are now convinced that ye never came within the compass of this great Salvation. I say yet unto you, if ye did never spend one hour in secret weeping and lamenting, because ye had not a right to this Gospel-redemption, it is but too probable you had never yet a right to it. Yea, know it, that such of you would little care to let precious Christ depart without any grief of heart: I think if this were voiced within this house to day, whether or not shal Christ go and depart, I doubt if there would be many heart-dissenters, though many tongue-dissenters. Oh! I fear there would be many hearts here, saying: O Christ! depart, and go thy way: Yea, there are many *Gadarens* here, *who prefer their kine and swine to precious Christ, and would beseech him to go out of their coasts.*

VIII. Eighthly, those persons slight the great Salvation, who never took pains to engage their hearts to take hold of Christ and the Gospel. Christ is near to you this day: The great Salvation is near to you, and is now, even now offered unto you;

there

therefore are there any who will take pains to lay hold on it? I obteſt you all who are here, by the beauty and excellency of him who is the Author of this great Salvation, that ye come and partake of it: *I obteſt you* by all the joyes of Heaven, that ye embrace this great Salvation: *I obteſt you* by all the terrors in Hell, that ye embrace it: *I obteſt you* by the promiſes of the everlaſting covenant, that ye embrace it: *I obteſt you* by all the curſes that are written in this book of the covenant, that ye embrace it. *I obteſt you* by the love you owe to your immortal ſouls, that ye will once be wiſe, and come partake of the great Salvation. May I now have it, ſayeſt thou? Yea, I ſay unto you all, ye may have it to day; ye may be partakers of it before ye go hence. And ſo before I proceed any further, I do in the Name and authority of him who ſent me here to day, and is the Author of this great Salvation, freely offer it unto you to day. But I know there will be eight ſorts of humors within this houſe to day, in relation to this great Salvation which is now offered unto you.

1. I think there will be ſome of *Gallio*'s diſpoſition here to day, that will care for none of theſe things: Yea, there are many here that will not give a fig for the rich offer of the great Salvation. But I ſay, Curſed be that perſon who putteth on *Gallio*'s temper to day, that will care for none of theſe things.

2. I fear there will be many of *Pilat*'s humor here to day, who will ſay, they find nothing againſt

the man, yet will cry forth, *Take him, and crucifie him.* They find no fault with Christ, and yet will be content that he be crucified. Now can ye say any thing against Christ, who is the Author of this great Salvation? Produce your strong arguments: Are there any here who have any thing to say against him? I am here to answer in his Name. I hope there is not one here who hath any thing to say against the Author of this great Salvation; And why then do ye not take him? See unto your selves that there be none of *Pilat*'s humor here to day, that will cry out, *Ye find nothing in Christ why he should not be received*, and yet will be content *that he be crucified.*

3. There will be many of the *Jews* humor here to day, who cry forth, *Away with Christ, away with Christ, and give me Barrabas.* But, oh! what a hellish word is that, *Away with spotless Christ, away with transcendent Christ, and give us the world?* Now are there any here who will be so gross slighters of this great Salvation? Will ye slight this great Salvation, and embrace your Idols, which shal once prove a crown of thorns unto you?

4. There will be some of *Felix* humor found here to day, that will say, *O Christ, go away at this time, and I will hear thee at a more convenient season.* But I say unto you, who will not hear me to day, nor embrace this great Salvation, I shal defy all the Ministers in *Scotland* to assure you, that ye shal get another offer, if ye send me away to day: There is not one that can or dare engage, that the

the great Salvation ſhal be in your offer any more. Therefore, I ſay, let none of *Felix* temper be here to day, that will ſay, *They will hear Chriſt at a more convenient ſeaſon*

5. There will be ſome of *Balaam*'s temper to day, who will deſire to *die the death of the righteous*, and to have their laſt end like his; yet they deſire not to live the life of the righteous: But I ſay unto you, ye ſhal never die the death of the righteous, if ye live not the life of the righteous.

6. There will be ſome of you here to day, who I hope, at leaſt will be of *Agrippa*'s humor, that will ſay, *Thou haſt almoſt perſwaded me to be a Chriſtian.* I ſay unto thee, O wilt thou quickly cut with that word *almoſt*, and put in that world *altogether*, and ſay: O precious Chriſt! *thou haſt altogether perſwaded me to be a Chriſtian.* However, if thou come no greater length, I intreat thee come this length, that ſo thou mayſt cry out, *I am almoſt perſwaded to embrace Chriſt the great Salvation*; and may be ere long ye will come further.

7. There will be ſome of *Judas* temper here to day, *who will betray Chriſt for thirty pieces of ſilver*; yea, ſome would ſell Chriſt, Heaven, their Idols and all, for leſs *then thirty pieces of ſilver.*

8. I think there will be many of *Eſau*'s profane temper here to day, *who will ſell their birth-right for a meſs of pottage.* Now wil ye enquire at your ſelves, Am I the perſon that will give my *birth-right for a meſs of pottage?* Doth mine heart ſay, *I will ſell my birth-right, becauſe I am hungred, and ready to die?*

What will it profit me, give me a mess of pottage, and I will quite my birth-right? I know there are not a few such here to day: therefore I intreat you, enquire at your selves what is your humor. Oh! shal the great Salvation that ye have slighted so long, be slighted this day also? And shal there be none to embrace it? Oh! enquire, and stand in aw, lest the wrath of the most High pursue you.

Now I shal give you these seven considerations, which may provoke you not to slight, but embrace this great Salvation.

1. The first consideration, that the not embracing this great Salvation, is one of the greatest acts of folly that can be, *Jer.* 8. 9. *They have rejected the word of the Lord*: and immediately it is subjoined, *And what wisdom is in them?* And so *Solomon* doth assure you, they cannot be wise who neglect this great Salvation, *Prov.* 1. 7. *Fools despise wisdom and instruction*: Therefore may I not say unto you, be ye who ye will, though ye were the greatest heads of wit in all this place, ye are but stark fools, as long as ye neglect this. But would you be wise indeed, and wise unto eternal life? Then I intreat you, come and embrace this great Salvation.

2. The second consideration to provoke you not to slight the great Salvation, is this, that the ruine and destruction of the slighters of it, is most certain and infallible, *Jer.* 11. 11. Where, speaking of slighting the Covenant, which is indeed the same great salvation, there is a *therefore*, put to the threatning. *Therefore thus saith the Lord, I will bring*

bring evil upon them, which they ſhal not be able to eſcape. I deſie you all, who are the ſlighters of this great Salvation, to find a back door, when Juſtice ſhal purſue you; for there is no door to eſcape, if ye embrace not this great Salvation: but *the earth will diſcloſe your iniquity, and Heaven will declare your ſin.*

3. Thirdly, let this conſideration provoke you not to ſlight this great Salvation, that Chriſt is exceeding ſerious and earneſt that ye ſhould embrace it: And I think that *Iſai.* 28. 23. ſpeaketh out his exceeding ſeriouſneſs, where four times he beggeth of his hearers, that they would give ear and hear his voice, ſaying: *Give ear and hear my voice, hearken and hear my ſpeech.* What needeth all theſe exhortations, but that Chriſt is moſt ſerious that they would embrace the great Salvation? And, O that there were a perſon here to day, as ſerious to the bargain as Chriſt is! But be who ye will, that ſlight this great Salvation, believe me, the day is coming wherein ye ſhal cry out, Alace, for my ſlighting of it! Wilt thou therefore think preſently with thy ſelf, O thou ſlighter of this great Salvation! What wilt thou ſay of thy ſlighting it? When the devil ſhal be leading thee in thorow theſe dark gates of Hell, O ſlighter of the Goſpel! how many alaces wilt thou cry, when thou ſhalt be paſſing thorow theſe dark gates into thy everlaſting priſon? Wilt thou not then cry out, O me, a ſlighter of the everlaſting Salvation! whether am I now going? Alace, now for my ſlighting of the Goſpel! And as thou

paſſeſt

paſſeſt thorow, thou ſhalt meet with numbers of miſerable comforters: There is not one in that priſon, who can comfort thee; but many dreadful alaces ſhalt thou then both cry and hear, if thou embrace not this great Salvation.

4. Fourthly, let this provoke you not to ſlight the great Salvation, that ye will get it for a very look: O ye within this houſe to day, ye will get this great Salvation for one look, *Iſai.* 45. 22. *Look unto me and be ſaved, all the ends of the earth*; for a very look ye will get this great Salvation, and do ye ever think to get Heaven at a lower rate?

5. The fifth conſideration to provoke you not to ſlight this great Salvation any more, is this, there is not one of you who is a ſlighter of it, but your ſlighting it ſhal increaſe your immortal bonds. Man or woman, be who thou wilt, when thou art ſlighting this great Salvation, thou art but platting a cord wherewith to bind thy ſoul eternally in theſe unquenchable flames, *Iſai.* 28. 22. *Be ye not mockers, leſt your bonds be made ſtrong.* I ſay therefore unto you, *old men*, mock not, *leſt your bonds be made ſtrong: Old women*, near unto your graves, mock not, *leſt your bonds be made ſtrong: Young men*, be ye not mockers, *leſt your bonds be made ſtrong: Young women*, vvho are in the flower of your time, mock not, *leſt your bonds be made ſtrong:* but now, alace! vvill there for all this be a perſon here to day vvho vvill be a mocker of this great Salvation.

6. The ſixth conſideration to provoke you not to ſlight this great Salvation any more, is this: ye know

know not but that your dayes may be near unto a close; I say, you know not but the day of the preaching of this great Salvation may be near unto a close. What knoweſt thou, O man or woman! but this ſhal be the laſt Sermon that ever thou ſhalt hear concerning this great Salvation? And yet for all this, ſhal we be ſent away without one conſent to embrace or receive it? O! will ye be perſwaded to look to Chriſt, and ſo to take him?

7. The ſeventh conſideration to provoke you not to ſlight the great Salvation, is this, That there is a fivefold Salvation comprehended under this great Salvation.

1. The firſt is this, come and partake of this great Salvation, and thou ſhalt have Salvation from thine Idols: And hereby I do proclaim liberty this day unto captives: I am ſent forth this day with the keyes of your priſon-houſe, to open your priſon doors unto you, if ye will embrace this great Salvation. I ſay unto you, *O ye priſoners, come forth and ſhow your ſelves*; for the keyes of your priſon-houſe are with us, to open your priſon doors unto you; therefore, O come forth, and embrace this great Salvation! Will there be any (ſhal I think) here that will refuſe to come forth? *O! go forth, and flee from the land of your captivity, and from the houſe of your bondage.*

2. Thou ſhalt have Salvation from thy darkneſs & from thine ignorance. I ſay unto you who underſtand no more of God nor the ſtones of the wall; I command you come forth, and partake yet of this great

great Salvation, and unto you ſhal light ariſe, even the day ſpring from on high ſhal viſite you.

3. If ye will come and partake of this great Salvation, ye ſhal have deliverance from all your fears. Doſt thou fear that thou ſhalt be poor? Come and partake of this great Salvation, and thou ſhalt be delivered from it. Art thou afraid of Hell? Come and partake of this great Salvation, and thou ſhalt be delivered from that fear. Art thou afraid at the wrath of God? Then come, I ſay, and partake of this great Salvation, and thou ſhalt have redemption from that and all thy fears. *With him is plenteous redemption, and he can make thee quiet from the fear of evil.*

4. If thou wilt come and partake of this Salvation, thou ſhalt have deliverance from all thine anxieties, and from all thy cares. Ye are now careful and anxious about many things; come, and partake of this great Salvation, and it will make you careful but only for the one *thing neceſſary*.

5. If ye will come and embrace the great ſalvation offered unto you this day, ye ſhal be helped before ye go hence, to ſing that Song, *O death! where is thy ſting? O grave! where is thy victory?* Now, O will ye come and embrace this great Salvation, *And ye ſhal be more then conquerors thorow Chriſt who loveth you?* Are there therefore anie here to day that would have victorie over the devil, and over their own heart? Then come and embrace this great Salvation, and then your victorie is certain.

But now to preſs home this great Salvation upon you

you a little further, there are nine ſorts of perſons who are invited to come and partake of this great Salvation offered this day: And I charge you, anſwer to your names when ye are called, and delay not to come.

1. Firſt, I invite and call here to day, all who are willing to come and embrace this great Salvation. Now, are there anie of you here to day, who are called *willing?* Then I invite you to come and embrace this great Salvation, *Rev.* 22. 17. *Whoſoever will, let him come.* But, oh! are there none here to day, who are named willing? I intreat you, if there be anie, do not deny your name, but come when you are called, and embrace this great Salvation.

2. Secondlie, thoſe perſons who thirſt for it, are invited to come, and partake of this great ſalvation, *Rev.* 22. 17. *Let him that is athirſt, come.* Now if there be anie here who are named thirſtie, let them come and partake of this great ſalvation, and they ſhal be ſatisfied.

3. Thirdly, are there any money-leſs folk here to day? Let them come and partake of this great ſalvation. Are there no money-leſs folk here to day? I mean not that money or coin in your purſes; but want ye money? That is, want ye righteouſneſs? Then I pray you come and partake of this great ſalvation. I ſay, are ye ſo poor that ye have nothing but the fear of hell? Then I pray you come. If there be anie here who hath nothing to commend them to Chriſt, but neceſſitie? I ſay unto all ſuch, *O come, come, come,* and partake of this great ſalvation.

4. Four

4. Fourthly, Thoſe perſons are invited to come, (and I wiſh there were many ſuch) who are *weary*; but oh! Are there none here to day who are called *weary?* Are you not wearie in purſuit of your ſins? If there be any ſuch here to day, I ſay unto you, *O wearie folk, Come, come, come,* and partake of this great ſalvation, and of this excellent Goſpel-redemption that was purchaſed at ſo dear a rate.

5. Fifthly, Thoſe who are heavy loaden are invited to come, (and I think all of you may anſwer to this name) are you *heavy loaden?* O then come! But are there none here who are heavy loaden with ſin, with miſery, and eſtrangement from God? If there be any ſuch here, I ſay unto thee, old man, or young man, be who thou wilt, O come and partake of this great ſalvation.

6. Sixthly, Are there any here to day who are called blind? I ſay, if there be any of you who think you want eyes to ſee the precious excellencies of Chriſt, I invite you to come and partake of this great ſalvation.

7. Seventhly, Are there any who are called lame here to day? I ſay unto ſuch, *O come, come, come,* and partake of this great ſalvation; for we are ſent forth to day to call in the blind and the maimed, and the lame, that they may come and embrace this great ſalvation; therefore are there none here to day who may be called ſuch? Are you neither blind nor lame? I hope many of you will not deny that you are ſuch; therefore I ſay unto you, *O blind, halt, and maimed, Come, come,* and partake of this great ſalvation.

8. The

8. The eighth sort of persons invited, are those who are *sick*; therefore if there be any sick folk here to day, be who you will, I say unto you, *O come* and partake of this great salvation; *for the whole need not the Physician, but the sick.*

9. Ninthly, Are there any here to day who know not their name, or their condition? I say unto you, O nameless folk, come and partake of this great salvation; Come to Christ for the knowledge of your souls condition; Come as a nameless one, and he shall not reject thee; though thy case were so evil that thou couldst not give it a name; for *of all that come unto him, he sendeth none away.*

Now where do you find your name and surname? O do you not know it? I hope now you may know; therefore I intreat you answer to it, and so come away and partake of this great salvation.

But I am afraid there be many strong iron bars in the way of some of you, which you cannot win over. Ah, how fast are some souls locked in Satans snare! and therefore I shall speak a little for discovering of those bars that hinder from embracing this great salvation, that so you may be the better helped to remove them.

I. The first great iron bar which keepeth folk from embracing this great salvation, is the bar of ignorance; and I am afraid that this (as a mighty bar) hindereth many of you: You are ignorant of your selves, and of the condition of your souls; you are ignorant of the Law, and of its severity, and you are ignorant of the precious Gospel in its condescendency.

dencie. O pray unto God, that for Christ's sake, he would break that great bar of ignorance; for till that be done, Christ may take up that complaint, *Jer. 5. 4.. Surely they are fooliſh, they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgement of their God.* I ſay this bar of ignorance keepeth you from embracing this great ſalvation.

II. The ſecond bar which keepeth manie from cloſing with Chriſt, is, the bar of *preſumption*; for ſome will cry out, What need have I to embrace the great ſalvation? Have I it not alreadie? But I ſay unto thee, O fool, thou art, by all appearance, yet in bondage. O that this evil bar of preſumption were put away; for it is one of the greateſt impediments which lieth in the way of our embracing this great ſalvation that is in your offer to day: Therefore I ſay unto you, if you will come no further, I intreat you, come this length, to confeſs that you want this Goſpel-ſalvation, and that you are indeed ſtrangers to this Redemption purchaſed by Chriſt.

III. The third bar that keepeth perſons from embracing this great ſalvation, is the bar of *unbelief*: you believe not what we ſay to you about this great ſalvation. I know that ſome of you are of the Stoicks and Epicures humor, who cry out, *What meaneth this man? He ſeemeth to be the ſetter forth of ſome ſtrange God.* But I ſay unto you, I am not the ſetter forth of anie ſtrange God, but it is Jeſus of *Nazareth* whom I preach unto you. Alace! ſome of you think this great ſalvation to be ſome

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morning dream, or ſome golden fancie: But I ſay unto you, it is neither a dream, nor fancie; but a real truth that we preach unto you.

IV. The fourth bar that keepeth perſons from embracing this great ſalvation, is the bar of *diſcouragement*; this ſtrong bar keepeth manie ſo faſt, that they cannot embrace this great ſalvation, though it be freely offered unto them. I ſhal ſay no more to you who are ſuch, but counſel you to do as thoſe four Lepers did, 1. *Kings* 7. 4. who ſate at the gate of *Samaria*, who ſaid; *Why ſit we here till we die? If we ſay, we will enter into the City, then the famine is in the City, and we ſhal die there: and if we ſit ſtill here, we die alſo. Now therefore come, and let us fall into the Hoſt of the Syrians; if they ſave us alive, we ſhal live; and if they kill us, we ſhal but die.* Even ſo ſay I unto you, that if you abide in the ſtate of unbelief, you ſhal ſurelie be undone; therefore go forth, for you know not but God may work a great ſalvation for you: and if you will quite your unbelief; and cloſe with Chriſt in the offer of this great ſalvation (by Faith) you ſhal have no more to do, *but eat and drink, and divide the ſpoil.*

V. The fifth bar that withholdeth perſons from embracing this great ſalvation, is the bar of *unwillingneſs*; *Ye will not come to me that you may have life.* And alace! this is an irõ bar indeed, by which al that are in hel have barred themſelves out of heaven. Alas! ſhal you be ſuch wretches alſo? O what a dreadful ſound is that, *Wo unto thee, O Jeruſalem! Wilt*

thou

thou not be made clean? When ſhall it once be? Ah! *Turn you, turn you, why will you die?* Why will you ſlight this great ſalvation? O will none of you this day embrace it?

VI. The ſixth bar that with-holdeth perſons from embracing this great ſalvation, is the bar of *worldly-mindedneſs*: Many of you are ſo fixed to the world, that you cannot come and cloſe with this great ſalvation. I may allude to that word ſpoken of *Saul* 1 *Sam.* 10. 22. that he *hid himſelf amongſt the ſtuff*; for many have buried and neſted themſelves in the midſt of the world, that they cannot embrace this great Salvation.

VII. The ſeventh bar which keepeth many from embracing this great Salvation, is the bar of *hard-heartedneſs*; there hath ſuch a ſtupidity and hardneſſe of heart ſeized upon many, that let Chriſt preach as he will to them (by his Word, or by other diſpenſations) they are no more moved, than if his Word and diſpenſations were a thouſand miles from them. O that ſtrong bar of hardneſſe of heart, when ſhall the Omnipotent hand of God break it?

VIII. The eighth bar that hindereth many from embracing this great Salvation, is the bar of *ſloathfulneſs*: Many of you cannot be at the pains to embrace it; but I ſay unto you, there is but ſmal pains in the way of godlineſſe: I ſay unto you, it may ſo eaſily be had, that it is in your offer to day; and if you will, you may put forth your hand and take it. Conſider therefore what you will do. O will

you

you deſpiſe it? I ſay, will you ſtill neglect and deſpiſe it? Will you but read that dreadful word? *Acts* 13. 40, 41. *Behold ye deſpiſers, and wonder, and periſh.* Tell me freely, Would you have us to return this anſwer to him who ſent us, that you are deſpiſers of the great Salvation? Say to it, are there none of you who (for all this) will conſent to partake of this great Salvation? O captives and priſoners, and you who are in the bonds of Satan, will you come and partake of this great Salvation, and you ſhall be made free? I have an act of releaſe for you to day, if you will come and make uſe of it, you ſhall be ſet at liberty. But oh! ſhal the priſon doors be caſt open, and yet none come forth? But that I may come to a cloſe, I ſay yet unto you, O poor priſoners, *go forth, go forth,* and partake of this great Salvation. Oh! will you not come forth? What holdeth you in? the foundation of your priſon-houſe is ſhaken to day, therefore if you will but come forth, and caſt a look to Chriſt, your very ſhakels ſhall fall off your hands, and you ſhall be as thoſe who were never bound. Now I leave this with you, and to make you think upon it, I ſhall ſpeak theſe five words to you, and I intreat you think upon them.

1. Firſt, I have excellent tidings to tell you; (I hope ſome of you will give ear to them) *viz.* there is a great perſon come here to day, and that is the Mighty Author of this great Salvation, who hath brought everlaſting righteouſneſſe with him, deſiring you to make uſe thereof; it is his deſire that you

you would take his excellent gifts at his hand. These I say are the tidings that I have to preach unto you; and I hope never to be declared a liar for what I preach unto you: I say yet unto you, that Christ the author of the great Salvation desireth to give it freely unto you, if you will but take it. But O will you not take it? I think if you did see an hundred men lying in prison or dungeon without all light, bread or water, and a great Prince coming to them, saying, I desire you all to come forth, and partake of this great liberty which I bring unto you; and every one of them should answer, *I scorn to come forth at this time*; would you not think them exceeding great fools? And yet I fear this act of great folly falls out in many of your hands to day; that when Christ hath given us the keyes of your prison doors, and they are opened, you will not come forth: But I must intreat you yet to come forth and shew your selves. For who knoweth but we may be commanded to shut your prison doors again, and to seal them with seven seals, with an unalterable decree from heaven, never to be recalled? Wherefore, O ye Prisoners, *go forth, go forth*, from your prison-house.

2. Secondly, I would say this to you, that it is not without much ground that this Salvation (offered to you) is called a great Salvation. I know a little paper of two or three sheets might contain all the salvations that ever man obtained; but the world would not be able to contain all the books which might be written to the cōmendation of this great

great salvation: yea, (unto any who will embrace it.) I say, First, if thou find not this salvation above thy faith, then go thy way when thou art come: But I know thou wilt find it both above thy faith and hope. Secondly, if thou find it not above thy desires when thou art come unto it, then go thy way again; but were thy desires as the sand upon the Sea shore, thou shalt find alwayes more in this Salvation than ever thou couldst desire. Thirdly, if this Salvation be not above what thou canst conceive, then go thy way when thou art come to it; but think of it as thou canst. it shall alwaies be above thy thoughts of it. Fourthlie, if this Salvation be not above thy opinion of it; then go thy way when thou art come unto it; but I know thou wilt find it far above thy opinion of it. Therefore seeing it is so great a Salvation, as that all the world could not contain all the books that might be written in the commendation of it; O! will you embrace it, even to day, while it is in your offer?

3. Thirdlie, I would say this unto you, Be perswaded that there is no sin that will more provoke the Majestie of God to punish you than the sin of slighting this great Salvation. *Bring forth these murderers*, saith the Lord, (of the slighters of this invitation) *and slay them before me.* I intreat you enquire at your own hearts what you will answer when you are reproved for slighting of it. Old men, vvill you ask at your ovvn hearts vvhat you vvill answver to Christ vvhen he shall propose that question to you, why slighted you the great salvation? Old vvomen, vvhat

what will you anſwer when he ſhall ſay to you, why ſlighted you the great Salvation? Young men and young women, inquire at your own hearts what you will anſwer, when Chriſt ſhal ſay to you, why ſlighted ye the great Salvation? Can ye imagine any anſwer to that queſtion? O dreadfull ſhall the wrath of God be, that ſhall be executed upon the ſlighters of this great ſalvation!

4. Fourthly, I would ſay this unto you, that heaven is waiting to hear what acceptation the offer of this great Salvation doth get among you. Here is the great Salvation, here is the offer of it, and here is the commendation of it; what ſay you to it? Is it not an excellent Salvation? Is it not a free ſalvation? Is it not a great Salvation? Is it not an eternal Salvation? Why then, do ye not welcome it? Can any of you ſay any thing to the diſcommendation of it? I know you cannot; Yea, I dare ſay, your own hearts are admiring it as moſt excellent; and therefore, O will ye accept it! Alace, ſhal there be none here who will be found accepters of this great Salvation, ſo freely offered to day!

5. Fifthly, I would ſay this to you, let all the Angels praiſe him who is the author of this great Salvation. All the Saints round about the Throne praiſe him who is the author of this great Salvation. All thoſe who are expectants of heaven, praiſe him who is the author of this great Salvation. All ye to whom this offer is made, praiſe him who is the author of this great Salvation. O heaven, praiſe him who is the author of this great Salvation. O all ye

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fowls of the air, praise him who is the Author of this great salvation. O fire, hail, snow, vapors, stormie winds, and tempests, praise him who is the Author of this great salvation. All the tribes of the earth, praise him who is the Author of this great salvation. Our own soul, praise him who is the Author of this great salvation; and all that is within us, bless him who is the Author of this great salvation. O! who would not praise him, who is the Author of this great salvation? Are there anie here that will refuse to commend him? O! think upon him, and let not this be a day of slighting him. Now, where are your hearts at this time? I will tell you where many of your hearts are, they are thinking upon the world: But, I am sure, there are not manie of them thinking upon this great salvation. Now, what resolution mind ye to go away with to day? Oh! have ye no resolution beyond what ye had when ye came hither to day? Are there anie here who have this resolution, *To whom shal we go, but to him who is the Author of this great salvatiõ, who alone hath the words of eternal life?* Even the Lord breath it upon you. Or is this your resolution, that through Christ's strength, *forsake him who will, ye will never forsake him?* O! have ye this resolution, *That ye will esteem more highly of the great salvation then ever ye did?* O that *the Lord would keep these in the imaginations of the thoughts of your hearts for ever.* But as for you who have no resolutions to embrace this great salvation; O! wherewith shal I commend it unto you? Do not your own necessities commend it? But if

nothing can perſwade you to come away and embrace it, then this place ſhal be a heap of witneſſes againſt you; *for it hath heard all the words of the Law which he hath ſpoken unto you*, *Joſh.* 24.

Oh! caſt your eyes upon theſe pillars of the houſe & ſtones in the walls: I take them as ſo manie witneſſes, that they may ſpeak & teſtifie againſt you in the great day of the Lord, if ye neglect this great ſalvation to day. Therefore, as ye go away, be thinking upon it, & whether or not ye mind to embrace it now while ye may have it. This day I ſet life and death before you: I have ſet before you both the great ſalvation, and the great damnation: And, O that ye had underſtanding in all theſe things, that ye being wiſe might be provoked at laſt to embrace this great ſalvation; the which we do yet again entreat you to think upon. Is not Heaven looking upon you at this time, to ſee what ye will do with this great offer of ſalvation, which I have this day from the Lord preſented unto you? Now to him that can perſwade you to embrace this great ſalvation, this Goſpel-redemption, this bleſſed myſterie, into which the Angels deſire to pry: To him *who can bring you back from the pit, and can enlighten you with the light of the living*: To him who hath the keys of your priſon, *Who can open, and none can ſhut; and can ſhut, and none can open*: To him, *Who hath all power in heaven and in earth communicate*: To him *who can deliver you from the power of the grave, and can ſet you free from all your enemies*, we deſire to give praiſe.

SERM

SERMON II.

Heb. 2. 3. *How shal we escape if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?*

THere are two great and most ordinarie complaints in these dayes. First, there are manie who complain, that their estates and persons are in bondage, and that they are sold for slaves to the hands of strangers: But, O that we could turn over the complaint to this, that our souls are in bondage, and that we are yet in the *gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity*, that so we might be provoked to long for the great salvation that is in our offer! 2. There are many complaining, and not without much cause, that there is now such a toleration of errors: But, O wilt thou complain also of this, that within thine heart there is a toleration of lusts: is there not an act of toleration cõcluded in thy breast, that the Devil and all his companie may reign in thee at pleasure? Oh! have ye not need of great salvation? Shal I tell you, that Christ is courting your to embrace it; and that he putteth on all his most glorious robes, & manifesteth himself unto you, as a suitor, making offer of himself, & of his great salvation? O! tell me, have ye seen him? Or do you think to see him this day? What robes hath he on? There are five glorious robes wherewith he cloaths himself, when he condescendeth to manifest himself to his people.

First, he cometh to his own with the *garments of ſalvation*, according to that word, *Zach. 9.9. Rejoice, O daughter of Sion, greatly; ſhout, O daughter of Jeruſalem; for behold thy King cometh unto thee; he is juſt, and having ſalvation.* Ay, your King is come here to day, and will ye not fall in love with him, when he is cloathed with the garments of ſalvation? Can ye ever have a more conquering ſight of Chriſt, then when he is cloathed with ſuch an excellent robe, and offering you ſalvation?

Secondly, he appeareth to his own ſometimes *in garments dyed in blood*, according to that word, *Iſai. 63. 1.2. Who is this that cometh up from Edom, with dyed garments in blood, as one that treadeth the wine fat?* And now I ſay to you, that will not look to Chriſt when he appears in the garmẽts of ſalvation, have ye a heart to refuſe him who hath fought ſuch a combat for you, who hath *trode the wine preſs alone*, and hath ſtained all his garments with the blood of thine enemies? Or is there anie here, who dare refuſe his ſalvation, when they ſee how *he treadeth his enemies in anger, and trampleth them in his furie*, and thus, *ſprinkleth their blood upon his garments.* O! tremble at this ſight, and ſeek quarter from him in time, or he ſhal dye his garments with the blood of thine immortal ſoul.

Thirdlie, Chriſt appeareth unto his own, being cloathed with theſe humble robes of condeſcendencie, when he came in the *ſimilitude of ſinful fleſh.* O! what a ſight was that, to behold the Prince of Heaven cloathed with our nature? What

a sight was that to behold him that was *cloathed with light as with a garment*, to be cloathed with our infirmities; yet he condescended to cloath himself thus, that we might have access unto him, and be partakers of his gifts? O! can we refuse him, when love hath thus pressed him to put on the beggars weed, that he *might say to worms, ye are my brethren, and my sisters.*

Fourthlie, Christ sometimes manifesteth himself being cloathed with the garments of beautie and ravishing Majestie: such was the sight that the Spouse got of Christ, *Song* 2. 3. *As the apple-tree amongst the trees of the wood, so is my beloved amongst the sons.* And *Song* 5. when she saw him *white and ruddie, and the standard-bearer of ten thousand.* And such was that joyful sight of him, when his garments was as the light, and white as the snow, which he had at the transfiguration, when these glorified ones did come, as it were, Ambassadors from that higher house to make him a visit.

And fifthly, Christ he sometimes appeareth to his own in robes of dreadful Majestie, and terrible highness and loftiness, when the soul upon the first sight of him remains dead, and there remaineth no more life in them: such was the sight *Daniel* got, in the tenth Chapter, and such was the sight that *John* got of Christ, *Rev.* 1. 17. And I would ask of all that are here, What a sight have ye gotten of Christ to day? In which of all these robes have ye seen him? It is true, we are not to look to the extraordinarie sights of him; but yet if ever

thou haſt ſeen him in anie of his wooing robes, ſure he hath appeared matchleſs; and how then ſhal ye then refuſe him.

But now to come to the words I was ſpeaking unto you of; The firſt thing in the words, to wit, that there are manie who live under the offer of this great ſalvation, that do ſlight it, and do not embrace it. And now I ſhal onlie adde a few things further unto you. 1. Let me propoſe a few conſiderations, to perſwade you to embrace this great ſalvation. God forbid we go away before we embrace this Goſpel-ſalvation: and therefore I charge you in his Name, go not away before ye embrace it. And to preſs it home upon you, there are theſe eight or nine properties of this great ſalvation that is offered unto you this day.

And firſt, it is *a free ſalvation*; ye have no more ado but to put forth your hand and take it. O! come and take it. Chriſt hath foughten for this ſalvation, and there is no more required of you but to come and reap the fruits of his victorie; *Who ever will, let him come*; there is nothing that ſhould move you to ſtay away. *O captives, bond ſlaves to Satan! O priſoners of hope!* will ye come and partake of the great ſalvation? What holds you from coming away, and partaking of it? It is freelie offered unto you. Ay, believe it, Chriſt requires no more of you, but that ye ſhould come and take it out of his hand: *If ye conſent to obey*, the bargain is ended; *ye ſhal eat the good of the land*, Iſai. 1.

Secondlie, this great ſalvation is a compleat

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ſalvation that is offered unto you to day; this is clear, *Luke* 1. 71. *That we might be ſaved from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us.* There is not an enemie that is in the way, but if thou wilt come and partake of the great ſalvation, thou mayeſt have victorie over it; ſo compleat a ſalvation is it that is in your offer this day. O! ſhal we paſs away, and not embrace it? O! ſhal our curſed hearts undervalue this compleat ſalvation, that is come to our door? Believe it, ſalvation is near unto you, if ye will take it.

Thirdlie, it is a wonderful ſalvation; it is ſuch a ſalvation as the Angels deſire to pry into it; and it is ſuch a ſalvation, that all the Prophets deſired to pry into it. It is almoſt ſix thouſand years ſince all the Angels of Heaven fell into a ſea of wonder at this great ſalvation. It is almoſt ſix thouſand years ſince *Abel* fell into a ſea of wonder at this great ſalvation. And what think you is his exerciſe this day? He is even wondering at this great ſalvation. Would ye ask at all the Angels in Heaven, would they not all ſay, O! embrace the great ſalvation? Would ye ask at all the Saints that are above, would they not adviſe you to embrace the great ſalvation? Should ye ask at *Adam*, would he not ſay, O! embrace this great ſalvation? Could ye ask at *Abel*, would he not ſay, O! embrace the great ſalvation? And would not all the Patriarchs ſay unto you, O! embrace the great ſalvation? And do not all that have taſted of the ſweetneſs of it, cry out unto you, *Come and embrace the great ſalvation?*

The fourth propertie of this salvation is, that it was bought at an exceeding dear rate, it is a dear salvation. Would you know the difference betwen Christ's coming to this salvation, & your coming to it? It is this: Christ was forced to travel through all the armies of the Justice of God. He was forced to drink of the cup of the wrath of God, before he could come to purchase this great salvation; and now what is requited of you to obtain this? We may say no more, but put out your hands & take it. Will ye look to the price that was laid down for this salvatiō? There is not a wound in the bodie of Christ, but it saith, *This is a dear salvation.* There is not a reproach Christ met with, but it saith, *O! is not this a dear salvation?* There was not a necessitie that he was put into, but it saith, *Is not this a great and dear salvation?* O Sirs! will ye not come and take this great salvation, this dear salvation? What must I give for it, say ye? I say, ye must give nothing for it: come, and take *it without money, and without price.* It was dear to Christ, but it shal be cheap unto you. O! is it not cheap unto you? I assure you, if ye will come to the market to buy the great salvation, there is none of you that needeth to stand for the price of it. O! come and take it, and have it, and there shal be no more priceing.

Fifthlie, it is an everlasting salvation that ye shal enjoy the fruits of throughout eternitie, as is clear, *Heb.* 9. 13. *He became the Author of eternal redemption unto us.* It is a salvation that the Devil can never be able to get out of your hand: if ye take

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it, ye ſhal never be robbed of it again. O come and partake of this great ſalvation, whereby the gates of Hell ſhal never prevail againſt you.

Sixthlie, it is a noble and honorable ſalvation; it is not to be taken out of one ſlaverie to another, but it is to be taken *out of priſon, that we may reign*, *Luke* 1. 71. compared with *verſ.* 74. it is, *That we being ſaved, may ſerve him without fear in holineſs and righteouſneſs all the dayes of our life.* I ſay, Come, come, and partake of this great ſalvation, that your glorie may be increaſed, and that ye may be exalted above the Kings of the earth.

Seventhlie, it is a moſt advantagious ſalvation: What are the advantages of anie ſalvation, that are not to be found in this? Is there not peace to be found through this ſalvation? Is there not libertie to be found through this ſalvation? Is there not eternal enjoyment of God to be found through this ſalvation? Yea, all ſalvations are in this one ſalvation.

Laſtlie, it is a Royal ſalvation, for it cometh to us from and through the Son of God: Chriſt is the Author of it, and we conceive Chriſt may be ſaid to be the Author of this ſalvation, in theſe reſpects. 1. He is the meritorious cauſe that did procure it: it was the price of his blood that was laid down, for to purchaſe this great ſalvation. 2. He is the fountain from whence it floweth, according to that word which we have cited, *Heb.* 5. 9. *He became the Author of eternal ſalvation.* 3. He is the perſon that fitteth our ſpirits for the partaking of it, and i-

he that removeth mountains out of the way, that we may have fair acceſs unto the great ſalvation. 4. It is he that muſt perſwade our hearts to embrace, and ſo take hold of it. He ſtandeth without, and cryeth to the heart to embrace this great ſalvation: and he ſtandeth within, making the heart cry out: Content, I will embrace the great ſalvation. He his indeed the perſon that commendeth, and doth point forth this great ſalvation unto us: He is the noble Miniſter of it: It began firſt to be preached by him.

Now is there any of you that have fallen in love with the great ſalvation, that ye may try your ſelves? I ſhal give you ſome evidences of the perſons that are near unto this great ſalvation. 1. Is thine eſtimation of the great ſalvation increaſed, be what it was in the morning when thou cameſt hither? Is thine eſtimation of the great Goſpel ſalvation a foot higher then what it was in the morning? I ſay unto thee, thou art not far from the great ſalvation; come away. 2. Is thy deſire after the great ſalvation increaſed, be what it was in the morning? Haſt thou ſtronger deſires after the great ſalvation, then before thou cameſt hither? That is an evidence thou art not far from it. 3. *Is thy thoughts of the neceſſity* of the great ſalvation greater then they were? Thinkeſt thou that thou haſt more need of the great ſalvation then ever thou thoughteſt before? And is thine opinion and thoughts of ſaving thy ſelf, leſs then they were before thou cameſt hither? Art thou forced to cry out, *None but Chriſt* can ſave me? I ſay thou art not far from the great ſalvation: wilt thou

thou come away! O that you would once ſeal this cõcluſion with much heart-perſwaſion, *I am undone without Chriſt, I am undone without Chriſt*, who is the Author of this great ſalvation. Are there any of you that are ſenſible that you are in the fetters of ſin, and in the bonds of iniquity? Are you brought to the conviction of this, that you are yet in the gall of bitterneſs? I ſay, if thou be brought to this length, to be ſenſible of thy bonds, and art crying out, *O Redeemer! haſten, and come away*: I ſay, if thou be ſenſible of thy bonds and impriſonments, and crying out; *O thou that waſt anointed from eternity to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound*! O haſten and come away and redeem me, even *poor me*, ſinking, ſinning, periſhing, ſelf-deſtroying *me*! thou art not far from the great Salvation. 4. Art thou a perſon who beginneth to weep, becauſe thou haſt been ſo long a ſtranger to Chriſt, and the great Salvation? Old men that are here, How long have you been ſtrangers to the great Salvation, and to the Author of it? Now will you ſhed one tear for your eſtrangement, and cry out, Wo is me that Chriſt and I have been ſo long aſunder? I ſay, if thou haſt come that length, thou art not far from the great Salvation: *Come away*. O pity your ſelves, make haſte, make haſte, and *come away*.

But now in the third place, let me give you ſome evidences by which you may know more clearlie whether or no you have embraced this great ſalvation, that you may know your ſelves, and

that you walk not down to your grave with a lie in your right hand.

The first evidence of a person that hath embraced the great Salvation, is, that he will have an high esteem of the Savior and Author of the great Salvation. Hast thou a matchlesse esteem of matchlesse Christ the Savior of the world? That is a speaking evidence unto thee thou art a partaker of the great Salvation: Art thou come to this length, that thou crieſt out, *None but Christ, none but Christ*, It is a speaking evidence, that thou art come to be a partaker of the great Salvation, when thou canst cry out that word, *Exod.* 15. 3. *The Lord is my strength and my song, he alone is become my salvation*: If Christ hath become thy Salvation, then it is like he hath become thy song. I would ask this of you, Were you ever brought this length, that you durst not adventure to praise Christ alone, but was forced to call in all the creatures, and say, *O magnifie the Lord with me*? O that is an evidence that you have embraced his Salvation.

Secondly, Those who have embraced the great Salvation, will study to maintain & keep their grips of it; they wil study to hold fast so precious a jewel; this is preſt, *Gal.* 5. 1. *Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*; yea, they will study to walk suteable to this noble mercy, at least, they will strive and endeavor to do it, as is also preſt in that same verse. I say, if thou hast been made a partaker of the Gospel of Salvation, thou wilt strive to keep thy self from the power of those things that once triumphed over thee.

Third-

Thirdly, A perſon that is a partaker of the great Salvation he will have a high eſteem of this mercy and Salvation; So *Paul* when he ſpeaketh of it here, he cannot but put ſome note of excellency to it, calling it *the great Salvation*; therefore I ſay, if thou has embraced the great Salvation, thou wilt have ſo high eſteem of it, that not to be ſo ſubjected to it as thou ſhouldeſt, or to be in ſubjection to the power of thy luſt in any meaſure, will be thy burden and affliction, the man will be ſorrie when he is brought forth from the houſe of his bondage unto the red ſea; he wil be ſorrie, that when he ſhould have ſongs of triumph over his idols put in his mouth, that they ſhould ſing ſongs of triumph over him.

Fourthly, A perſon that hath embraced the great Salvation, he wil be longing ſometimes for the day when this Salvation ſhall be compleat, when he ſhall ſing that ſong with *that numerous multitude which cannot be numbered*, Rev. 7. 9. O what a day ſhall it be, when thou ſhalt begin to ſing that ſong? *After this* (ſaith he) *I beheld, and lo a great multitude of all people which no man could number, of all people, nations and languages, ſtood before the throne, and before the Lamb, cloathed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and they cryed*: And how cried they? *They cryed with a loud voice.* They would not mutter the ſong, nor ſing ſilently; but *cryed with a loud voice*: And what did they cry, they cryed with a loud voice, *Salvation unto our God who ſitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb.* I would only ask of you that are partakers of the great Salvation,

tion, vvhat ſongs ſhall be put into thy mouth when the vvaters of *Jordan* ſhall divide themſelves, *that the ranſomed of the Lord muſt paſs thorow?* vvhen thou ſhalt ſing that ſong, *Pſal.* 115. 1. *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thee belongs the glory of our ſalvation.* O what a day ſhall that be, vvhen that excellent ſong ſhall be put into thy mouth! yea, what a day ſhall it be, when thou ſhalt be cloathed with thoſe excellent garments that are made mention of; *Iſa.* 6. 10. ſo he hath cloathed thee vvith the *garments of ſalvation*; and he hath covered thee vvith the *robe of Righteouſneſſ.* O what robes are theſe? Did you ever ſee ſuch excellent robes as theſe muſt be? I think we will misken our ſelves; O do you not think we will misken our ſelves, vvhen we ſhall put on theſe excellent robes! Now therefore is the bargain cloſed, or vvill ye go away before ye take this great Salvation? Dare ye go out at theſe doors and neglect the great Salvation? I vvould ask this of you, think ye it will not be moſt ſad, that Chriſt ſhould tell this in heaven of you to night; I vvas preached to a pack of ſtones; that none of them would love me? Will ye not be feared that this report ſhall be carried back to heaven of you? for vvhat report can Chriſt carrie back but this? Now is the cord of this great ſalvation let down unto you, is there none of you that will take a grip of it? vvil ye flighter after it; Will ye make this a rejoicing day in heaven; that is a faſting day unto you, and the way to make it ſo, is, to embrace the great Salvation. Now what ſay ye to it, old men? Let me

ſpeak

ſpeak to you, and ask your thoughts of the great ſalvation: Gray hairs ſhould be a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteouſneſſe: Old men, ſpeak your minds, that young men may not have your bad examples: What ſay ye of this Salvation? Is is not a moſt glorious Salvation? Is it not a moſt excellent Salvation that is in your offer? I intreat you ſpeak your minds, tell Chriſt ye are content to take the great Salvation; otherwiſe, whoever he be that will not partake of this Goſpel-Salvation, I in the name and authoritie of Chriſt our Maſter, denounce eternal and irrevocable war againſt him; put on your harneſſe, ye ſhall not boaſt when ye put it off again; the wrath and furie of God ſhall come upon you to the uttermoſt, if ye imbrace not this great Salvation: other wars are but for a time; the greateſt Captains that ever the earth did carrie, are now laid *down in the ſides of the pit, and their ſwords broken nnder their head.* Armies of ten hundred thouſand, an hundred years time have laid them all in their graves, and ended all their conteſts; but there is no diſcharge of this war that ſhal be concluded betwixt Chriſt and you: It ſhall become an eternal & moſt terrible war, which ſhal be but beginning when time is ended. Now peace or war, which of them will ye chooſe? Dare ye ſend a charge to Chriſt, and ſay ye will defy him? I am afraid there vvill be two things that many of us vvill report to day. Firſt, I am afraid there be many that vvill give *Pharaoh's* report to the offer of the great Salvation, and ſay, *Who is the Lord that I ſhould obey him?*

him? I tell you who he is, *He is glorious in holi-neſſe, fearfull in praiſes, doing wonders.* O embrace him before he go hence, and give not *Pharaohs* re-port, leſt ye be drowned in the ſea of his wrath, where there ſhall be no recoverie. Secondly, I fear there will be many here to day, that will give *Demas* report to his precious offer: I will go and forſake Chriſt, and embrace this preſent world: O bade exchange! Curſed be he that ſhal make it; will ye be of *Demas* humour. I fear there hath been many of that humour of a long time; but I entreat, you once be wiſe before you die. I confeſs that proverb, Old fools, are twice fools: I think old men that will not embrace the great Salvation, I think ye are triple fools. What wait ye for? Is there any thing can afford you any ſatisfaction but this great Salvation? Now are ye convinced, old men, that Chriſt is waiting for your anſwer, I in-treat you before ye go hence, ſpeak your mindes what ye think of the great Salvation: Is it not a lovely Salvation? Is it not lovely now? What ſay ye to it? I am to go away, and the offer is to be taken up at this time, and it is heard to ſay, if ever ye ſhal have an offer again. I would only ſay this to you, and be ſure of it; though I ſhould never be a par-taker of this great Salvation, yet I ſhal be a witneſſe againſt you that are not partakers of it. I tell and declare unto you, I ſhall be a witneſſe againſt you, if ye imbrace not the great Salvation. Now old men are ye perſwaded to embrace it? Let me obteſt you by the beauty of Chriſt, come and partake of the

great

great ſalvation, ye that are travelling upon the borders of eternity: Now if ye will give no more, give this, will ye go home and think upon it? I ſhall not be uncharitable, nor enter to judge your thoughts. I fear there ſhall be many declared and found guiltie amongſt us, that we have declared unto heaven we will not embrace the great Salvation, but have troden the blood of the *Son of God under foot.* Now I intreat you every one of you, ask of your ſelves if ye be the perſons that will *preſume in your hearts to do ſo.* Now I ſhall leave it with you, let it be a witneſſe againſt you: I ſhall leave it with this; O come away, old men, young men, old women and maids, come and embrace this precious Goſpel-Salvation. Ye may ſay, ye bid us come but we cannot come: I deſire no more of you, but to come with this, Lord I am content to come, but I cannot come: Come once to that; for if once ye be content to receive it, it will not be long before ye be able to receive it. Now ſhall Chriſt depart, and will none of you ſay ye are content to take him? Will ye charge your own conſciences with this; am I content to take Chriſt and the great Salvation! O bleſt, bleſt, bleſt be he that is the Author of this great Salvation, and bleſt be he that gets anie of the ends of the cord of the great Salvation, that we ſink not under the wrath and furie of the Lord! Come and embrace this great Salvation; and again I ſay, come and embrace it; for what can ye have if ye want it? And what can you want if you have it? I ſhall ſay no more, but cloſe with that word, *Iſa.* 62.

verſe

verse 21. *Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed to the ends of the world, to those that are far off:* What hath he proclaimed? *Say ye to the Daughter of Sion, Behold thy Salvation cometh, behold it cometh!* I say to you that are the ends of the world, Salvation is brought near to you, *Stout hearted and far from Righteousnesse*, the great Salvation is brought near unto you, and will ye send it away? Oh consider what ye are doing. And to him that can perswade you to embrace the great Salvation, we desire to give praise.

A SERMON
Concerning
DEATH.

Psal. 86. 48. *What man is he that liveth, and shal not see death?* &c.

IT is verie hard to determine where all that are here shall be within thirty years; for even ere that time come, many (if not all) of us who are here shall have taken up our eternal lodging. And whether we shall take it up in the eternitie of joy, or the eternity of pain, is also hard to determine, only this one thing I am sure of, that all of us shal shortly

ly be gone; *And ere long the ſhadows of death ſhall be ſitting upon our eye-lids, and our eye-ſtrings ſhal begin to break.* Therefore I would the more ſeriouſly enquire of you What wold you think if death were approaching this night unto you? Think you that Jeſus Chriſt is gone up to prepare a place for you, even for you? Surely I think vve are all near to eternity, and there are ſome hearing me to day, vvhom I defie the vvorld to aſſure that ever they ſhall hear another Sermon: Therefore I intreat you all to hear this preaching, as if it were the laſt preaching that ever you ſhould hear; and O that we could ſpeak it as if it were the laſt Sermon that ever we would preach unto you. Believe me, Death is another thing than we take it to be: *Oh what wil many of us do in the day of our viſitation! when deſolation ſhall come from a far, where will we flee for reſt, and where will we leave our glory?* Old rich men, where will you flee when death aſſults you? Old poor men, where will you flee vvhen death aſſaults you? Old women, where will ye flee when death aſſaults you? Young men, where will you flee when death aſſaults you? Young women where will you flee when death aſſaults you? It was an ancient obſervation of *David*, *Pſal.* 39. 5. That God *had made his dayes as an hand-breadth*; which either may relate to the four-fold eſtate of man, *viz.* his Infancie, his Child-hold, his Man-hood, and his Old age: Or it may relate to the four-fould time of his life, *viz.* his morning, his forenoon, his afternoon, and his evening, yet all our lifetime is but a

day

day. And O think you not that our day is near unto a close.

Now before that I begin to speak to any thing from the words, I shall speak a few things to these two questions, which I conceive may not altogether be unprofitable.

Quest. 1. Whether it be lawfull for any to desire to die, and to return unto their long and endlesse home? Whether it be lawfull for one to cry out, *O time, time, flee away, and all my shadows let them be gone*, that so long eternitie may come.

Answ. I say it is lawfull in some cases for one to desire to die: For it was *Pauls* desire, *Phil.* 1. 23. *I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ which is far better.* And 2 *Cor.* 2. 2. *We groan earnestly, desiring to be cloathed with our house which is from Heaven.* I long greatlie till the twentieth one year of my Age come, when my minoritie shall be overpast, that I may be entered Heir of that matchlesse inheritance. But to clear in what cases it is lawfull to desire to die.

1. I say it is lawful to desire to die, when it floweth from a desire of uninterrupted fellowship and communion with Christ, and conjunction with him; this is clear, 2 *Cor.* 5 6. *Knowing that whilst we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord*, therefore verse 8. *We are willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.* As also it is clear *Phil.* 1. 23. *I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which*

is

is far better. It was his great end to have near and unmixed communion with Christ: What aileth you *Paul?* Might one have said, may you not be content to stay a while here: Nay, saith *Paul, I desire to be gone, and to be with Christ.* Wast thou never with him here *Paul?* I have been with him saith he; but what is all my being with him here, in comparison of my being with him above, *While I am present in the body, I am but absent from the Lord.* Therefore I will never be at rest, saith he, get what I will, until I get Christ, until I get those naked and immediate embracements of that noble plant of renown, the flower of the stalk of *Jesse*, who is the light of the higher house, the eternall admiration of Angels.

2. It is lawfull to desire to die when it floweth from the excellencies of heaven, and from a desire to partake of those excellent things that are there: this is clear, 2 *Cor.* 5. 4. *We groan being burdened*; or as the word is, *We groan, as they who are pressed under a heavy burden, that we may be cloathed upon*, &c. What aileth you to groan so *Paul?* O! saith he, I groan *that mortalitie may be swallowed up of life.*

3. It is lawfull to desire to die when it floweth from a desire to be freed from the bodie of Death; and from those temptations that assault us, and from those oppressions whereunto we are made subject by it. Doubtlesse *Paul* desired to die on this account, when he cried out, *Rom.* 7. 24. *O wretched man that I am, Who shall deliver me from this body of death!*

He

He longed greatly for the day, *wherein he ſhould be made white like the wings of a Dove, covered with ſilver, whoſe feathers are of a yellow gold.* O! ſaith *Paul*, I am as one impatient till I be above, where I ſhall be cloathed with thoſe excellent and cleanly robes, *the righteouſneſs of Chriſt.* Oh! ſaith *Paul*, I think every day a year, till I ſhall be poſſeſſed of that kingdom where Satan cannot tempt, and the creatures cannot yeeld, and where I ſhall be free from all my fears of ſinning. Now in all theſe reſpects who would not deſire to die? But to guard theſe, I would give you theſe four Cautions.

1. *Caution*, Your deſires to die ſhould not be peremptorie, but ye ſhould deſire to die with ſubmiſſion to the wil of God; ſo that although he would fill up fifteen years more to your life, you ſhould be content to live it out.

2. *Caution*, When your deſires are haſtie, and off hand, ſuſpect them; for ſome when they meet with any outward croſſe (without all deliberation) will cry out, *O to be gone, O if I were dead!* But your deſires to die ſhould be deliberate, but not haſtie, or raſh.

3. *Caution*, It is not lawfull to deſire to die becauſe of perſonall affliction. Many when they meet with bitter afflictions, will cry out, *O to be gone!* They long for death, even upon that account; ſuch were *Job*'s deſires, *Job* 20. 21. 22. and *chap.* 6. *verſ.* 7, 8. *O that I might have my requeſt, even that it would pleaſe God to deſtroy me, &c.* This deſire was very unlawful.

4. *Cau-*

4. *Caution*, It is not lawful to desire to die, when thy predominant idol is taken away from thee; yet such was *Jonah*'s desire, chap. 4.23. *Jonah* thought his credit and reputation (vvhich was his idol) was gone, and could never be regained, therefore he wished to die. But I vvould say this to you, that some wil have ten desires for death, when they have not one desire for heaven. And what moveth Christians to be so desirous to die? It is not so much because of their hope, as because of their anxietie; it is not so much because of their confidence, as because of their impatience. But I say unto you, vvhen your desires of death are not accompanied vvith desires of heaven, suspect them. 2. I would say this, that there are some vvho vvill have ten desires for death, vvhen they vvill not have one for the death of the body of death: But it vvere good for thee vvho art such, to be desiring the death of the body of death; then shouldest thou be in a more suteable frame to desire to die. 3. Some will have heartie desires to die, and yet when death cometh they will be as unwilling to die as any: It hath been observed, that some vvho have much desired to die, when death came, have cryed out, *O spare a little that I may recover strength, &c.* 4. There is a great difference between a desire to die, and death it self. It is an easie thing to desire to die, but it is a very great business to meet with death, and to look it in the face when it cometh. We think death ere it come near to us, to be but childrens play, but when we meet with it, it maketh us change our thoughts; for it is a great businesse to die.

Quest.

Queſt. 2. Is it lawfull for a Chriſtian to deſire to live vvhen he is ſummoned to die?

Anſ. In ſome caſes it is lawfull for a Chriſtian to deſire to live, even when he is ſummoned to die; vvhich is clear from the practice of *David*, *Pſa.* 39. 13. where he prayeth *that the Lord would ſpare him a little*; it is alſo clear from the practice of good *Hezekiah*, *Iſa.* 38 3. when he was commanded *to ſet his houſe in order, for he ſhould die and not live*; he cried forth, *Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy ſight*; *and* Hezekiah *weept ſore.* Or as the vvord is in the Original, *he weept with great weeping*: but to guard this, take theſe two *Cautions.*

Caution 1. Thy deſires to live (vvhen thou art ſummoned to die) ſhould not be peremptorie, but vvith ſubmiſſion to the will of God, that if it be his pleaſure to remove thee preſentlie out of time thou ſhouldeſt be content to die.

Caution 2 Thy deſires to live ſhould have gracious principles, and alſo a verie gracious end, as is moſt clear from *David*, *Pſal.* 39. 13. vvhere he ſaith, *O ſpare me a little that I may recover my ſtrength, before I go from hence, and be no more*: His deſire to live, was that he might have more victorie over his idols; as if he had ſaid, my deſire to live, is, that I may have ſtrength to wreſtle with & overcome my idols; and vvithout all controverſie, *Hezekiah*'s deſire vvas a moſt precious and well grounded deſire: However, I vvould ſay this unto thee, that thou ſhoul-

ſhouldeſt examine thy deſires to live, as much (if not more) as thy deſires to die; for we are ready to ſhun death, if we could; but he is that univerſal King, unto whom all of us muſt be ſubject ere long.

Now in the words that are read unto you, there are theſe ſix things which may be clearly obſerved from them.

Firſt, that it is a moſt true and infallible truth, that all perſons ſhal once ſee death; as is clear in thoſe words: *Who is he that liveth, and ſhal not ſee death?*

Secondly, that this truth [that we ſhal once ſee death] is not much believed, or thought upon by many; therefore it is that the Pſalmiſt doubleth the aſſertion: *Who is he that liveth, and ſhal not ſee death? Shal he deliver his ſoul* (that is, his life) *from the hand* (that is) *from the power of the Grave?*

Thirdly, that ſometimes a Chriſtian may win to the ſolide Faith of this truth, that once he muſt die; this the Pſalmiſt wan unto, as it is alſo clear in that word [who] *Who is he that liveth, and ſhal not ſee death?*

Fourthly, that the certainty of this, that once we ſhal die, ſhould be kept in our mind; therefore that note of attention, *Selah*, is put to it; as if he had ſaid, Take heed that there is none living that ſhal not die.

Fifthly, that howbeit ſome perſons put the evil day far away, as if they were not to ſee death; yet

is the day coming when they ſhal ſee death, and death ſhal take them by the hand.

Sixthly, we ſhal take notice of this from the context, that the Chriſtian who is much in minding the brevity of his life, will believe the certaintie of his death. The Pſalmiſt was ſpeaking of the ſhortneſs of his life in the preceeding verſe, and in this verſe he ſpeaketh of the certaintie of death.

Now as for the firſt of theſe things obſerved, *viz.* That it is certain and moſt ſure, that we muſt all once die; I hope there are none of you here who will deny it, although I confeſs ſome few of you believe it; yet ſaid the woman of *Tekoah*, 2. *Sam.* 14. *We muſt all die, and be like water ſpilt upon the ground, that cannot be gathered up again; and God doth not accept the perſon of any.* And *Job* 30. 13. *I know thou wilt bring me to death, and to the houſe appointed for all living.* And it is very clear, *Eccleſ.* 8. 8. *There is no man that hath power over the ſpirit to retain the ſpirit, neither hath he any power in the day of death, and there is no diſcharge in that war, neither ſhal wickedneſs deliver thoſe that are given to it.* It is alſo clear, *Heb.* 9. 27. *It is appointed unto all men once to die:* So it is moſt clear that we muſt die. I remember of one *Philip* King of *Macedonia*, who had one ſubſtitute for this very end, to cry at his Chamber door every morning; *Memento mori, Memento mori, Memento mori:* Remember thou art to die. And it is reported to have been the practice of the Nobles of *Greece*, that in the day wherein their Emperor

was

was crowned, that they presented a *Marble-stone* unto him, and he was enquired after what fashion he would have his Tomb-stone made? Which practice speak this unto us, that although these were most destitute of the light of the Scriptures, they were very mindful of death. Believe me, death may surprise us before we be aware: for it is most certain that we must die; but there is nothing more uncertain then the way how, and the time when we shal die.

Death will surprise some, as it did *Abel*, in the open field, *Gen.* 4. 8. Death will surprise some, as it did *Eglon*, in his parlour, *Judges* 3. 21. And death will surprise some, as it did *Saul* and *Jonathan*, in the flight, 1. *Sam.* 31.

Now in speaking unto this point, I shal first speak a little to those advantages which attend those that live within continual sight of death. Secondly, I shal give you some considerations to press you to prepare for death. Thirdly, I shal give you some directions to help you to prepare for death: And then we shal proceed unto the second point of doctrine which we observed from the Text, and shal speak a few things from it unto you, and so come unto a close for this time.

First then, we conceive there are these seven advantages which attend those who live within the continual sight of this truth, that they must die.

First, the Faith of approaching death, will make a soul exceeding diligent in dutie: this was our blessed Lords Divinitie, *John* 9. 4 *I must work*

the work of him that ſent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work: That is, death is approaching, therefore I muſt work. It is clear alſo, 2. *Peter* 1. 12. compared with *verſe* 14. in the 12. *verſe*, *Peter* is exceeding diligent in his dutie, and the ground of his diligence is in the 14. *verſe: Knowing that ſhortly I muſt put off this my tabernacle*, &c. Yea, it is even the Epicures argument, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we ſhal die.* And ſhould not the Chriſtian much more cry out, *Let me watch, and pray, for to morrow I may die.* I ſay, if the Epicures did make uſe of that notion, to make them vigorous in the purſuit of their pleaſures; O! how much more ſhould a Chriſtian improve it for making him vigorous in the purſuit of his duty? Therefore I ſay unto you all, O! be diligent, for your night is drawing near. O Chriſtians, and expectants of Heaven, are you not afraid leſt you be nighted before you have walked the half of your journey? For if you be nighted on your journey to Heaven, before you come to the end of your race, there is no retiring place whereunto you may turn aſide to lodge; therefore, *O work, work, work; while it is to day*; for behold death is approaching, and then ſhal we all be called to an account.

2. The faith of approaching death will make a Chriſtian exceeding active in his duty; he will not only be diligent, but alſo exceeding ſerious and zealous in the exerciſe of his duty; this is clear from that notable exhortation, *Eccleſ.* 9. 10. *Whatſoever*

thy

thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: and the reaſon is, *for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave whether thou goeſt.* Wherefore, O! be active while you are alive, for you ſhal never work any more after you are dead; and if ye leave but one work undone, there is no doing of it after death: there is no work, ſaith *Solomon*, in the grave; therefore, O! be active.

3. The faith of this truth, that we muſt all die, will help a Chriſtian to be exceeding mortified to the things of a preſent world. Oh, covetous men and women! would you ſhake hands with cold Death but once every morning, I ſhould defy you to purſue the world ſo much as you do. *Paul* was much in the meditation of his change, which made him, 2. *Cor.* 4. 18. to overlook thoſe things that are temporary, *While we look not,* ſaith he, *to the things that are ſeen, which are temporal; but to the things which are not ſeen, which are eternal.* Therefore *chap.* 5. 1. *Knowing that if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens; therefore in this we groan earneſtly, deſiring to be cloathed upon with our houſe which is from Heaven.* What aileth you *Paul*, might one have ſaid, may you not take a look of the world? No, ſaith he, *for I know that if this earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, I have a houſe with God, not made with hands but eternal in the heavens:* That is, I know that ere long the pins of my tabernacle will be looſed, and it will fall down about mine ears;

therefore I must look for another dwelling house. And 1. *Cor.* 7. 24. *The fashion of this world passeth away*; therefore saith he, *vers.* 32. *I would have you without carefulness, caring to please the Lord.* And *Phil.* 4. 2. *Let your moderation be known to all men; the Lord is at hand.* As if he had said, death is approaching, and at hand, therefore I intreat you be sober. But I think many of us will be found, like *Saul*, hid amongst the stuff; that is, we will be lying amongst the midst of the pleasures of this passing world. But I say to thee who art such an one, that death will break the strings of thine harp, and thy musick will quickly cease. O! but death will make thee have a low esteem of the world. O! blessed is the person who hath those thoughts of the world all along his way, which he shal have of it at his death! Have not the most cursed wretches been forced to cry out: *Oh! I would give ten thousand worlds for Christ?* Have not some persons (who have had the Moon upon their head, and that have made their belly their God) being forced to cry forth at death: *O cursed person that I am, that ever I made the world my God!* Alace, that I contented my self with the world! Therefore I say unto thee who art such an one; O! stay thy pursuit after the world, for death is approaching, that will cause all thy worldly comforts to evanish.

4. When a Christian believeth this truth, that he must die, it will be an exceeding great restraint to keep him from sinning, as is clear, *Job* 31. 13. compared with *vers.* 14. where *Job* reckoning over many

many good deeds done by himſelf, ſaith: *What then ſhal I do, when God riſeth up? And when he viſiteth, what ſhal I anſwer him?* As if he had ſaid, Sirs, miſtake me not, I am not boaſting much of my ſelf, for I could not have done otherwiſe; elſe what ſhould I do when God riſeth up? How could I anſwer to God, if I had done otherwiſe? I think it were a notable practice for each of you, when temptations begin to aſſault you, to ſay: *O temptation! what ſhal I anſwer to God when he riſeth up to reprove me, if I ſhould yeeld unto thee.* Likewiſe *Eccleſ.* 11. 9. where *Solomon* diſſwading young men to purſue after vanity, bringeth this as a reaſon: *Know thou, that for all theſe things, God will bring thee to judgement.* Therefore I ſay unto thee who art often tempted to ſin, let death and reckoning with God be ſtill in thy ſight, and I defie thee then to embrace half ſo many temptations as now thou doſt. I intreat you to anſwer all your temptations with that one word: *What ſhal I do when he riſeth up? And what ſhal I anſwer when he viſiteth me?*

5. When a Chriſtian liveth vvithin the ſight of this truth, that he ſhal once ſee death, it ſhal make him exceeding patient under every croſs wherewith he meets: Such a Chriſtian will hardly meet vvith a croſs, but he will quiet himſelf vvith this; Death vvill put me beyond this croſs: This is but a cloud that will quickly paſs away. And for this cauſe did *David* ſo compoſedly put up that deſire, *Pſal.* 39. 4. *Lord, make me know mine end, and the meaſure of my dayes.* He vvas ſure that

the knowledge of his end would put him in a ſober and patient frame.

The ſixth advantage is this, The faith of approaching death will teach the perſon that hath it to ſtudy, ſaving wiſdom; this is clear *Pſal.* 90. 12. where *David* putteth up this requeſt: *So teach us to number our dayes, that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom.* As if he had ſaid, I will never think my ſelf wiſe till I know that bleſſed piece of Arithmetick, *How to number my dayes.* I would deſire every one of you all, to think with your ſelves every morning when you ariſe, Now we are a day nearer unto eternity, then we were before: and at the end of every hour, Now we are an hour nearer unto eternity, then we were before. I ſay, think often, yea alwayes thus, We were never ſo near Death as we are now; for, oh! are we not all nearer to eternity to day, then we were yeſterday?

The ſeventh advantage attending the faith of approaching death, is this, That it will make a Chriſtian very careful in preparing for death: it is impoſſible for one to believe really that death is approaching, and not prepare for it. Say what you will, if you be not careful in preparing for death, you have not the ſolide faith of this truth, that you ſhal die. Believe me, it is not every one that thinketh he believeth this truth, that believeth it indeed. And, O how dreadfull is it for an unprepared man to meet with death? He deſireth not to die; yea, he would give a world for his life; but die he muſt, whether he will or not; for death will not be requeſted to ſpare

a little when he cometh: and therefore, I ſay unto you: *Set your houſe in order, for you ſhal ſurely die.* Old men and women, *Set your houſe in order, for ſurely ye muſt die.* Young men and women, *Set your houſe in order; for to morrow ye may die, and be cut off in the flower of your age.* Think not that there are any who can ſell time: for I ſay, you ſhal never get time ſold unto you. Alace! I fear the moſt part of perſons that die now, death findeth them at unawares: for indeed the perſons that die amongſt us, when we come to viſite them, we may give you a full account of them; for we think they are all comprehended under theſe four ſorts.

Firſt, when we go to viſite ſome perſons on their death-bed, they are like unto *Nabal*, *their heart is dying and ſinking, like unto a ſtone, within them:* they are no more affected with death, then if it were a fancie. Alace, for the great ſtupidity that hath overtaken many! Therefore, I intreat you, delay not your repentance till death, leſt the Lord take away your wit, ſo that you cannot then repent, for your ſenſleſneſs and ſtupide frame of ſpirit.

A ſecond ſort we find in a preſumptuous frame, ſaying, They have had a good hope all their dayes, and they will not quite it now; they will go down to the grave with their hope in their right hand; or rather they will go down to the grave *with a lie in their right hand*: they live in a preſumptuous frame, and they die in the ſame deluſion: for when we tell them that by all probability they are going down to hell: they anſwer, God forbid! I was all my

time a verie honeſt man, or vvoman. But I love not that confeſſion; for there are manie ſuch honeſt men and vvomen in Hell this day.

The third ſort vve find have ſome convictions; that they have been playing the fool all their dayes, but vve can get them no further: I ſhal onlie ſay to ſuch; To go down to the Grave vvith convictions in their breaſt, not making uſe of Chriſt, is to go down to Hell vvith a candle in their hand, to let them ſee the way; and truelie the greater part that die, die in this manner.

Fourthly, there are ſome vvhom vve find in a ſelf-righteous frame, truſting upon the covenant of vvorks, and their own merits, and truſting by theſe to go to Heaven; yet neglecting the offer of Chriſt's righteouſneſs: But, alace! vve find not one of a thouſand in this frame, *I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt, that's beſt of all.* And ſcarcely do vve find any in ſuch a frame, *O wretched man that I am! who ſhal deliver me from the body of this death?* Therefore I ſay unto you vvho are all here; O, vvill you mind death before it take hold on you! Oh, mind your vvork now! for you vvill find that death ſhal be vvork enough for it ſelf, though you leave no work till then.

The eighth advantage that attendeth the Chriſtian believing this truth, that once he muſt die, is this; Death vvill not be ſo terrible to him, as it is to many vvhen it cometh. What, think you, maketh death *a King of terrors?* What maketh many to ſhake like the leaf of a tree, vvhen they are ſum-

ſummoned to appear before God's Tribunal? It is even becauſe of this, they have not been thinking on death before it came, ſo as to prepare for it: and I fear many in this place may be feared for death; and that vvhen it cometh to them, they will ſay unto death, as *Achab* ſaid to *Elijah*; *Haſt thou found me? O mine enemie!* Surely death vvill take you, and bring you to the Judgement-ſeat of Chriſt: therefore ſtudy by all means to think often upon it, and make ready for it; for, believe me, death is a very big word; for it will once make you ſtand vvith horror in your ſouls, if your peace be not made up vvith God. I know not a more dreadful diſpenſation, then death and a guilty conſcience meeting together.

The ſecond thing that I ſhal ſpeak unto from this firſt obſervation, viz. *That it is a moſt certain and infallible truth, that all perſons ſhal once ſee death*, ſhal be to give ſome good conſiderations for preſſing you to prepare for death.

The firſt conſideration is this, that to *die well, and in the Lord*, is a moſt difficult work; therefore I intreat you, prepare for death. It is a difficult work to communicate aright: it is a difficult work to pray aright; and it is a difficult work to conſer aright. But I muſt tell you, it is a more difficult work to die aright, then any of theſe; it is true, it is more difficult to cõmunicate aright, then to pray aright; yet it is much more difficult to die aright, then to cõmunicate aright; for it is a moſt difficult work to die in the Lord. Death will put the moſt

accurate

accurat Christian that is hear to a wonderful search; and therefore I vvill tell you nine things that death vvill try in thee. 1. Death vvill try both the realitie and strength of thy faith; it may be easie for thee to keep up faith under many difficulties, but death shall put thy faith to the greatest stresse that ever it did meet vvith. Yea, know this, that the faith of the strongest Believer may get, and ordinarily doth get, a set at death, the like whereof it never got before; therefore prepare for death. 2. Death will try thy love to God, some persons pretend much love to him, but death will propose this question to such a person, *Lovest thou him more then these? Lovest thou him more then thy wife? More then thy house? More then thy friends?* But your unwillingnesse to die giveth us much ground to fear that many have little love to Christ, but much to the world, and so dar not answer the question, *Lord thou knowest that I love thee.* 3. Death will try thine enjoyments; some of you may be ready to think that you meet with many enjoymnts, so that you might reckon, as you think to fourty enjoyments, and sweet out-lettings; but beware that death bring them not down to twentie. I have known some who thoght they had met fourtie times with God; but vvhen death came, it made them take down the count to the half; therefore seing death vvill try the reality of thine enjoyments, O prepare for it. 4. Death vvill try thy patience; thou mayest seem to have much patience novv, but vvhen death cometh (thou art put to die) it vvill put thy patience to a great tryal, therefore prepare

for

for it. 5. Death vvill try the realitie of thy duties; yea, even thoſe duties wherein thou hadſt moſt ſatisfaction, as thy communicating aright in ſuch a place, thou hopeſt that is ſure, thy reading the ſcripture at ſuch a time aright, thou hopeſt that is ſure, thou prayedſt at ſuch a time aright, and hopeſt that is ſure, thou meditateſt in ſuch a place aright, and thou hopeſt that is ſure. But, believe me, death may make thee change thy thoughts; for there are ſome perſons who have communicated and prayed, &c. as right as any in this generation, vvho, for all that, vvill not find ſix duties vvherein they can find ſatisfaction at death. 6. Death will exceedinglie try thy ſincerity vvhen it cometh: An hypocrite may go all along his vvhole vvay undiſcovered; yet death may bring him to light, and make it appear vvhat a man he is. 7. Death vvil diſcover unto thee hid and ſecret ſins, of which thou never had a thoght before; yea, albeit thou thoughteſt theſe had been forgotten, death vvill let thee ſee them ſtanding between thee and the light of his countenance. 8. Death vvill accurately try thy mortification: Some think they have come a great length in mortification: but believe me, death will try it, and put it to the touch-ſtone. 9. Death vvill try thy hope whether it be real or not. I ſhall only ſay this, that all the other graces muſt low their ſails to faith, and ſo it is, faith muſt carry us thorow, being that laſt triumphing grace vvhich muſt fit the field for us when all the other graces will faint and ly by. It is faith that muſt enter us fairly vvithin the borders of eternitie

nity: it is faith muſt gainſtand all the temptations of death; yea, all the other graces (as it vvere ſtand by and ſee faith) ſtrike the laſt ſtroak in this war.

The ſecond conſideration to preſſe you to minde death, is this: That ye are to die but once. O labour to do that vvell, vvhich you are to do but once, and the vvrong doing of vvhich can never be helped: If ye pray not aright, ye may get that mended, and if ye communicate not aright, ye may get that alſo mended: But alas, if ye die not aright, there is no mending of that: Therefore O prepare for death, that ye may die well, ſeeing ye are to die but once.

The third conſideration to preſſe you to mind death is this, that ye are pronounced bleſſed who die in the Lord, *Rev.* 14. 13. *Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord.* O let that provoke you to prepare for death, that ſo ye may die in the Lord, that is the only way to make you eternally happy. I confeſſe it is a queſtion difficult to determine whether it be more difficult to die wel, or live wel? I ſhall not anſwer it, but rather deſire you to ſtudie both.

The fourth conſideration to preſſe you to prepare for death is this, *viz.* That though thou put all thy vvork by thy hand before death, yet ſhalt thou find that death ſhall have work enough for it ſelf; yea, as much as thou ſhalt get done. It vvill then be much for thee to win to patience, it vvil be much for thee to vvin to the ſight of thy Juſtification, and it vvill then

then be much for thee to win to assurance: O then is it not needfull for thee to put all thy work by thy hand before thy latter end come? Wherefore I may say to you as *Moses* said in his Song, *Deut.* 32. 29. *O that they were wise, that they understood this,* that they *would consider their latter end*! O that ye had this piece of divine wisdom! I pray you consider that sad word, *Lam.* 1. 19. *She remembered not her last end*; and what of it? *Therefore she came down wonderfully.* So will the down-coming of many in this generation be wonderful, who consider not their last end.

The fifth consideration for pressing you to prepare for death is this, *viz.* That their labor shall end, but their works shal not be forgotten, as is clear from that forecited place, *Rev.* 14. 13. *They rest from their labours, and their works follow them*; and is not that a glorious advantage?

The sixth consideration to presse you to prepare for death is this, *viz.* that death may come upon you ere ye be aware: ye know not but death may surprise you this night, before ye go home to your houses: and therefore let that presse you to study a constant preparation for death.

The seventh consideration to press you to prepare for death is this, *viz.* that as death leaveth you, so will judgement find you; If death shall leave you strangers to Christ, ye shall appear before his judgment seat strangers unto him, therefore I intreat you all to prepare for it. I think that noble practice of *Paul*, exceeding worthy of imitation, 1 *Cor.* 15. 31. I

die

die daily, which I think doth cõprehend these three things. 1. That *Paul* had death alwayes in his sight. 2. It comprehendeth this, that he laboured to keep such a frame as that every moment he should be readie to die, so that whensover death should put the summonds in his hand, he should be content to answer. 3. It comprehenderh this, that he laboured to lay aside and remove all thing out of the way, that might detain him from laying down his tabernacle. O saith *Paul*, I labour so to clear my self of all hinderances, as that, when ever I shal be summoned to remove out of time, I may willingly lay down my life. Therefore I would ask you this question, *viz.* When did you make your last testament? I think it were suteable for us to be renewing our latter-will every day, for in so doing *Paul* made an excellent testamẽt, the better of which none that died since have made, 2 *Tim.* 4 7.8. *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith*; these are very sweet articles; and then he addeth; *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousneß, that the Lord the righteous Judge shal give me at that day*. And think ye not that very sweet that he would leave something unto you in Christ's name? *viz.* *And not for me only, but for all them that wait for his appearance.* Now I come to the third thing proposed, *viz.* To give some directions for helping you to prepare for death.

Direct. 1. I intreat you be much in preparation for death every day, for it is even a preparation for heaven, to be taking a sight of your grave and latter end every day.

Direct.

Direct. 2. I intreat you be much in these duties. First, in self-examination, that your compts may be clear with God; for many a ragged compt shall we have when death and we shall meet, Secondly, be much in the exercise of repentance, that so ye may have every fault and corruption in you mourned for, before death and you meet. Thirdly, be much in the exercise of faith, *making your calling and election sure.* Fourthly, be much in the exercise of mortification, and that will help you to keep a loose grip, not only of the world, but also of your other idols: and if ye be much in these, ye shall undoubtly be prepared for death.

Direct. 3. Be much in minding the excellent things of heaven, a Christian that would be prepared for death, should have all his thoughts and conversation there. I think it would be an excellent help, in preparation for death, to take a sight of the crown every day.

Direct. 4. *Labour always to keep a good conscience void of offence toward God and man.* I say labour to keep thy conscience clear, and that shall be a continuall feast unto thee.

Direct. 5. Slight not any known duty, do not crucifie any conviction, neither break any resolution; put these three together, and that will exceedingly help you to prepare for death; I say, see that ye adventure not to slight any known duty, see that ye adventure not to crucifie any conviction; and see that ye adventure not to break your resolutions.

Now

Now we come to the ſecond thing which we obſerved from the words, *viz.* That this truth that we ſhall once ſee death, is not much believed by many of us, and to make this appear, we ſhall only give ſome evidences unto you to prove that we are not as yet prepared for death.

1. *Evidence*, Doth not the unſpeakable ſtupiditie that hath overtaken many, ſay that we are not people prepared for death? Alace, many of us would find our ſelves in a moſt ſtupid temper if we were preſently to die, for many of us are no more moved with the threatnings and terrors of God, then if they did not belong unto us; and this ſaith, we are not as yet prepared for death.

2. *Evid.* That we are not prepared for death in our purſuing ſo much after the vain and paſſing delights of a preſent world. Many of us *riſe up early, and go to bed late at night, and eat the bread of ſorrow all the day, and load themſelves with thick clay*: And I am ſure that ſuch a perſon (being night and day taken up with the world) is not prepared for death. I remember a word recorded of ſuch a wretched one who was exceeding rich; ſaid he, I would give ſo many thouſands of mony, if death would but give me one day; yet he got it not. And O how ſuddenly will death ſurpriſe many of you as it did him!

3. *Evid.* Which ſpeaketh forth our unpreparedneſs for death, is our impatience under every petty croſs that we meet with; for the prepared Chriſtian will be patient under verie ſharp croſſes.

4. *Evid.*

4. *Evid.* That we are not prepared, is our not endeavouring to live within sight of our interest in God: Oh if we were prepared for death, durst we live in so much uncertainty of our interest in God, and of our assurance of heaven!

5. *Evid.* Some of us can let our idols ly in our breast six years without repentance, and will never study to mortifie them, nor repent for them; and surelie such are not prepared for death.

Now I intreat you seriously to mind what hath been said, and that ye may the more seriously think upon it, I wil tell you some material challenges that your conscience at death wil present unto you; therefore take heed that ye may know how ye wil answer.

1. *Challenge.* Is the slighting of much precious time, and sinning away the precious offers of grace. O vvhat wil ye answer to that challenge when death shall present it to you! Death will say (or rather thine own conscience at death) vvhat ailed thee to sin so many hours, vvithout either praying, reading, or meditating? Now have ye any thing to answer vvhen death shall present this challenge to you? I intreat you premeditate vvhat ye will say: I intreat you prevent death by presenting it first seriouslie to your selves..

2. *Challenge.* That death will present unto you, will be for the killing of manie precious convictions vvhich ye have had. What vvill each of you answer at death, vvhen your conscience propoſeth this challenge unto you? Thou metst with such a challenge at such a time, and went home and crucified it;

And

And at another time thou metst with another challenge, and went home and crucified it. These challenges will be laid home to thy door, therefore think on them.

3. *Challenge.* Death will charge you for a formal hypocritical way of going about duties: I say your conscience will then tell you, that ye went to such a communion with a selfish end; and at another time, ye prayed hypocritically and formally: And what will ye have to answer when ye meet with these challenges? I confess, I know not what ye can answer to these. But I charge you, be thinking what ye will answer; for it may be that these convictions shall ly on your consciences, that even this day you have heard two searching Sermons, & did meet with some convictions, but made no good use of them; yea, and it may be ye did sleep all that time. O! what will ye answer, when it will be said to you, ye went to such a Sermon, and sleeped all the time, and ye went to such a Communion, but had no other end before your eyes, but to be seen of men? I intreat you, consider presently what you will answer to these.

4. *Challenge.* Will be for your breaking many precious resolutions. It will be said to some of you, that at the Communion in this place, ye took on vows, and did break them: I am sure ye cannot question the Justice of this challenge; therefore see what ye will answer.

5. *Challenge.* Ye slighted many precious offers of the Gospel. O men and women in this City! what will

will ye anſwer to this? I was often exhorted to take Chriſt, and yet would never take him: What will conſcience ſay to that, when death ſhal table it before you? I tell you what you muſt then anſwer: O curſed I, that ever refuſed Chriſt in the Goſpel! And ye ſhal then be confounded, becauſe this is your ſin. Believe me, there was never an offer of this everlaſting Goſpel, and of Chriſt in it, made unto you, that ſhal not at death (before or after it) be brought to your remembrance. And, O how ſad and doleful will it be to you, when Chriſt ſhal open the Book where your ſins are written, and begin with the ſin of ſlighting the great Salvation? Thus I invited you when you were twelve years old, and ye would not come. I invited you when you were thirty years old, but ye would not come. I invited you when ſixty years old, and ye would not come: What will ye anſwer to this? Have ye any thing to ſay? Or muſt ye not ſtand ſpeechleſs before your Judge, when he ſhal put home this challenge unto you? Therefore think ſeriouſly upon it, how ye will anſwer to it.

6. *Challenge.* Will be for your ſinning oftentimes againſt light: and, O how painful and ſad a challenge will that be at the day of death, when it will be ſaid, Thou ſinned with a witneſs in thy boſom, that thou waſt doing wrong. Thy conſcience will ſay, *Oftentimes I did tell thee this is ſinful*; yet wouldeſt thou not abſtain from it; and what will ye anſwer to this?

7. *Challenge.* Oftētimes ye ſinned upon very ſmal

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temptations, and what will ye answer to that? Must ye not then confesse it, and say, Oh how often have I deserted Christ, and embraced my idols upon a small temptation? Now I intreat you be thinking what ye will answer to these seven most material challenges, which certainlie shall be presented to you at death. I assure you, ye must either answer all your challenges in Christ, else ye will not get them well answered: Therefore I would exhort you to embrace the Gospel and Christ in it; that so let death propose never so many challenges unto you, ye may answer them all as *David* did, *viz.* *God hath made with me an everlasting Covenant*: And that will answer all your challenges, *though my house be not so with God, yet I have the everlasting Covenant to build my Salvation upon.*

Now to presse you to make use of Christ, I shall give you these four considerations.

Considerat. 1. If ye embrace not Christ now, death will be very unpleasant to you. O what else can comfort thee, when going through the region of death, but this, I am Christs, I am Christs? Is there any other thing can comfort thee in that day, but only this, *I am Christs, and he is mine*?

Consideration 2. If ye embrace not Christ & the great Salvation now, it will be an hundreth to one if ever ye get time or libertie to do it, when ye are going to die. For although manie delay their closing with Christ till death, yet scarcelie one of a hundred getteth favour to grip Christ at death: Therefore think

think on it; for you will not get your mind so composed at death as ye imagine, nor all things done as ye suppose; therefore now embrace the great Salvation.

Consideration 3. If ye delay your closing with Christ till death seize upon you, ye shall never be able to make up that losse. *For will the dead rise and praise God? Or shall any one come from the land of forgetfulnesse to take hold upon a crucified Saviour?* Therefore, O will ye take him for your Salvation.

Consideration 4. If ye will take Christ now, he shal be your guide when *ye are going thorow the valley and shadow of death.* And, O how blessed is the person that can sing that word, *Psal* 48. 14. *This is my God, he will be my guide even unto death.* If ye can sing that pleasant song, O how may ye be comforted when your eye-strings shall begin to break! O how happie is he who can say, *though I walk thorow the shadow of death, yet will I fear no ill; for I know that the Lord is with me!* Now this is the acceptable day, and the year of Salvation: Therefore, do not delay, but embrace Christ, lest death surprise you ere ye be aware, and so the acceptable day be lost. But unto these who think they may delay till death, I say, surelie there are manie damned atheists in hel that (sometime) did think as ye think, *I will make all wrongs right when death and I shall meet,* I hope that three daies repentance will satisfie for all my wrongs; for I am sure there are manie in hell, who did never get three days to think on their

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former wayes. Therefore, O come, come and embrace Christ presently! Now are ye all perswaded of this truth, that ye shall once sea death? Then [illegible] walking; for, believe me, there are many of us who shall go thorow death with many bruised bones, because of untender walking before God: We know it is not the multitude of words can perswade you to embrace Christ, for many of you never minded the thing; but believe me, death will preach these things unto you in a more terrible manner then we can do at this time. Therefore I say to each of you, O prepare to meet thy God, for if death find you in an estranged estate from God, I defie the Angels in heaven to free you out of that estate; and the day is coming, wherein thou shalt cry out, *O slighter of the great Salvation that I am, I would give ten thousand worlds for one Sermon again that I once heard wherein Christ was freely offered to me*, when thou shalt be tormented without hope of remedy; therefore *while it is to day hearden not your hearts*, for your late wishes shall not be granted when ye are gone; if ye make not haste. O therefore *haste, haste in time, and come out from the land of your captivity, and from the house of your bondage*, and take Christ for your redeemer, the guide of your youth and old age. Now unto him who can lead you thorow all these steps betwixt you and heaven, be eternal praise, *Amen*.

FINIS.